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OCTOBER 2014
ISSUE 224
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X-MEN: APOCALYPSE
ANT-MAN
THE SINISTER SIX

PLUS!
THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES
MAD MAX: FURY ROAD
STAR WARS: EPISODE VII

ON-SET EXCLUSIVE

JAMES BOND MEETS KICK-ASS!

KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE

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WONDER WOMAN

BATMAN

THE FLASH

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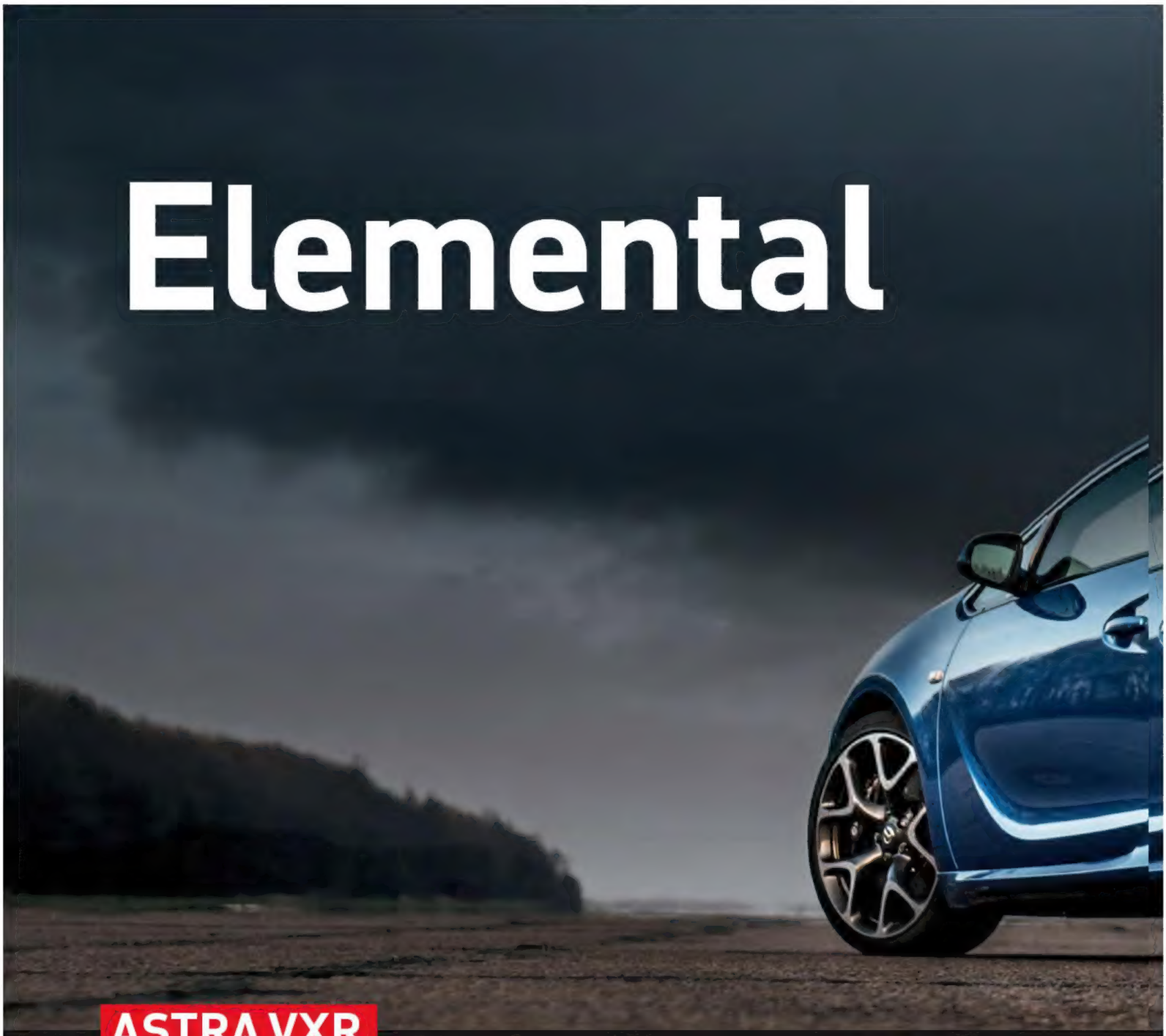

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and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Astra VXR: Urban: 26.2 (10.8), Extra-urban: 43.5 (6.5), Combined:

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October 2014 Issue 224

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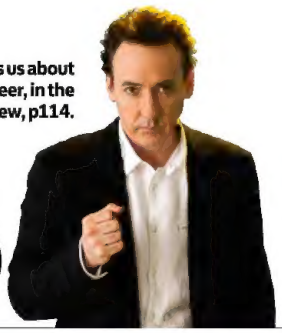

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dialogue

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Suiting up

Comic-Con is completely and utterly nuts. So this year we decided to dress for the part (that's Matt (news) and Matthew (reviews) opposite, getting into the spirit of it on their way to San Diego), in anticipation of five wonderful, punishing days to bring you all the latest exclusives on every comic-book movie on the horizon.

Let's face it, Marvel has owned the comic-book world for the last few years but the big question now is whether DC – with Justice League movies and their rather good TV shows on the way – are ready to take on the big boys. Read all about it from the heads of DC then meet the super team coming your way.

Meanwhile we've been exploring the sets of Kingsman: The Secret Service and The Maze Runner, chatting up cool kids Jesse Eisenberg and Aubrey Plaza and spending time with Woody Allen and John Cusack. Enjoy the issue!

Rosie

ROSIE FLETCHER
ACTING EDITOR

Comic-Con team, assemble!

Drop us a line:
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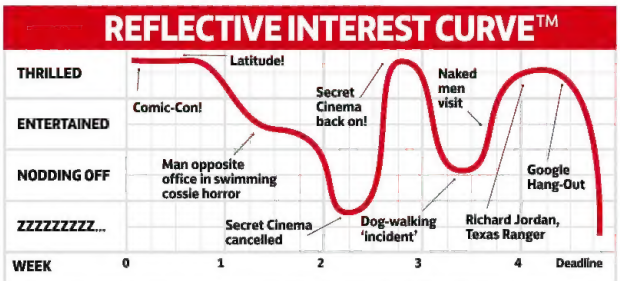
The ups and downs of making this issue...



STAR LETTER

While watching the rather ace *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* at my local cinema I was struck by a question that I would love some scientist-type bod out there to answer: "Is it physically possible for an ape to fire off not one but two huge machine guns while riding a horse?" I do suspect the reply will be: "Of course, you daft numpty, now jog on." But if you never ask you will never know.

PHIL, BEXLEY

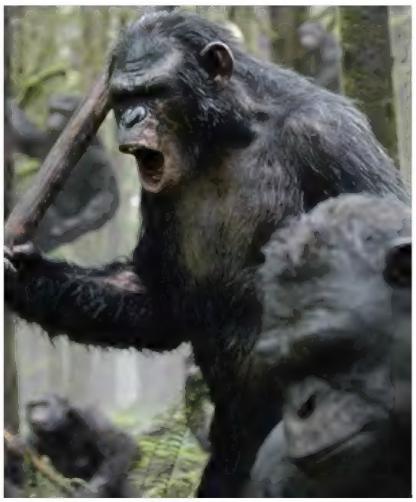
This sounds like one for our regular column, 'Is It Bollocks?' Today's guest expert: Caesar. "Of course not bollocks. Caesar come round your house and show you, numpty. Now on you jog. Phil and rest of numpties here receive copy of The Amazing Spider-Man 2, *released on DVD/BD/3D BD 1 September from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. Not send address? Guess how bothered Caesar is?"*

Kray-Kray

Upon hearing that Tom Hardy will be playing both Kray twins, I can't help but wonder why they didn't chuck Logan Marshall-Green in there to play the other one; they look exactly the same. More alike than Martin and Gary Kemp, and even their older brother Ross Kemp and his brother Phil Mitchell. Big family, eh?

ELLIS MASON, VIA EMAIL

Astute casting sir, but are you going to tell Tom Hardy he can't have two roles in the same film? He's got IMDb's hardest-sounding list of credits: Warrior. Lawless. *'Untitled Tom Hardy Outlaw Biker Project'. Don't mess.*



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e one

dialogue

Mail, rants, theories *etc*...

Luke Evans: he wants to bite you.

Can't believe it's not Butler

Having just read your feature on *Dracula Untold* [TF223], I'm more than a little excited. The casting of Luke Evans makes me dance a happy jig and I'm eternally hopeful that, unlike *The Raven* and *Immortals* he won't be the only part of the film worth watching. Unfortunately, I have to point out that your 'Prince Of Darkness throughout the ages' sidebar omitted the seminal *Dracula 2001*. How can you not have acknowledged Gerard Butler's spectacular take on the role and glorious 'Transylvanian' accent? Indeed, how can you forget the classic quote "Never fuck with an antiques dealer?" Thinking about it, I find it hard to believe *Dracula Untold* will be able to match *Dracula 2001*'s own vision of the character's origin story. Maybe I will just watch it for Luke Evans after all.

REBECCA REED, WHITBY

Alas, limited space meant omitting several of the squillions of screen versions of Dracula; though take our word Rebecca, if we could've squeezed one more in, it would've been Leslie Nielsen ("Renfield, you asshole!"). Great antiques line. Wasn't it Lovejoy's catchphrase?

'In 2007's I Am Legend, there's a billboard advertising Batman V Superman...'

Gleeful injection

Just writing to say that I love the new Career Injection part of your reboot. The Johnny Depp one was like you read my mind! My injections? Tom Cruise: less action, more acting. Matt Damon needs to get a little risky with darker projects. Henry Cavill needs to break out of the action mould and get some character-driven family dramas in there. I could go on but I'll leave that to you and your future injections!

REBECCA WYNNE-WALSH, DUBLIN

Glad you like the new slot, Rebecca. We're legally obliged to tell you that our 'injections' aren't the sort to stop you getting rabies on holiday. But they'll give you a giggle when the worst happens, so chin up!

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Displays of future past

I noticed when watching Will Smith hunt deer in 2007's *I Am Legend* that there is a huge billboard in the background

OFFICE SPACED

Chatter 'gems' overheard in the *Total Film* office this month...

"What's Aquaman's background?" "I don't want anything from NatWest or with penises" **"I love the word 'wigwam'."** "I prefer ellipsis..." "Who wants to hear me burp? I've got Tango, so...

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What you're saying online...

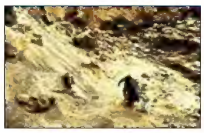
TOTALFILM.COM ON OUR WEBSITE...

150 Greatest Robin Williams Jokes
www.totalfilm.com/features/150-greatest-robin-williams-jokes
To mark the great man's passing, we present to you a collection of his finest funnies from throughout his career – though really, we're just scratching the surface. RIP.

30 Most Underrated '90s Movies
www.totalfilm.com/features/30-most-underrated-90s-movies
The decade's hidden gems, from *Mighty Aphrodite* to *Miller's Crossing*. Plus Kevin Spacey as the ultimate horrible boss.

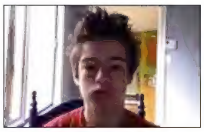
The Rover Google Hangout
www.totalfilm.com/features/watch-our-the-rover-google-hangout-with-robert-pattinson-guy-pearce
Our 16-minute sit down with *The Rover*'s leading men Guy Pearce and Robert Pattinson, who enjoys himself so much he ends up talking about 'comedy porn'.

VIRALS OF THE MONTH



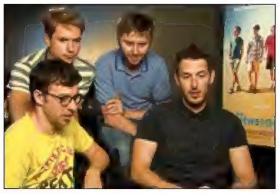
BATMAN & R2BIN
https://twitter.com/ZackSnyder/status/495592851468976129
Zack Snyder tickles the Twitter-sphere's ribs with a *Star Wars*/DC crossover jest. See also: Henry Cavill in Jedi togs.

THE LION KING: FROM BROADWAY TO SUBWAY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9QMM_nTuC4
It's the Circle Line of life, as the cast of the Broadway hit alarm/delight a bunch of subway passengers.



BOYHOOD REDUX
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdvojC0KSOM
Don't have three hours to watch Richard Linklater's masterpiece? Watch this 94-sec montage of selfies taken over a seven-year period.

YOUTUBE



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advertising *Batman V Superman*! The release date looks almost perfectly timed... I was wondering if this kind of subliminal advertising was allowed?

MIKE ROBERTS, VIA EMAIL

In the moviemakers' defence, in this case the 'advertising' was so subliminal EVEN THEY DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE DOING IT. Future Zack Synder obviously time-travelled on to the set, poster under his arm, while no one was looking. You know the reassuring thing about the BvS *in-joke/self-fulfilling prophecy? Even after civilisation has gone to shit and we're all eyeing each other as human ready meals, there'll still be comic-book movies! Yay!*

Ad World

Neil Parmar [*Dialogue*, TF223] makes a great point – kill the dire ads and show new talent (à la Picturehouse Cinemas). In fact, going against the anti-allocated seating lobby, I think there's a good chance that expensive ad time will be boycotted in future, knowing that you can slide into your pre-booked pew 20 minutes after the programme time without missing a beat of the feature. Surely then, the sensible money would be corporate sponsorship (Virgin Media Shorts, anyone?) of actual artistic content, rather than more soulless shiny car/acne cream ads that no one will watch...? Discuss.

STEVE ROSIER, ST NEOTS

Regarding Neil Parmar's letter, I can do without the adverts too. I like Neil's idea of giving up-and-coming filmmakers a chance, as a LOT of directors made ads before they were famous (Ridley Scott, Edgar Wright, Michael Bay). But I think a better solution would be a cap on the number of ads shown before a film, that way we don't get our brains frazzled and the young up-and-coming directors get their work experience!

BILL COLLINS, WILLENHALL

Maybe a please-all would be to keep the same number of ads, but have them all directed by world-class auteurs. Just imagine the soul Ang Lee would pump back into those zit-cream ads. It'd be "Richard Park-aaah!"-style rapture all round as those beastly blackheads feel the wrath of a fleet of illustrative cleansing arrows.

Know the score

I saw *The Bourne Legacy* twice before I realised how enticing the music is in this movie. Trust me, it is enticing. I feel the music was really underrated and overlooked by critics and music fans when it came out? One reason could be the nature of the film – the action, the plot, the name 'Bourne' and Jeremy Renner, who showed a toned 'pack at one point. It's totally understandable that no one was paying attention to the music, but I do hope it gets mentioned sometime in the future because it deserves recognition.

SANTI POKAR, VIA EMAIL

Looks like you've done the job, Santi. Got to admit, we don't remember the music terribly well (apart from Moby's bit at the end) – maybe because we drowned it with our usher-baiting screams of "Matt Da-mon! Matt Da-mon!" as we clawed the screen in search of his boyishly thoughtful face.

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Which comic-book character would you be? Tell us yours at @totalfilm #tfcomicbook

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FIRST WORD!

End of an era

THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES | Peter Jackson ups the tension for the final installment of the Middle-earth saga.

"The good thing with battles is that you can kill one or two people, and God knows there's a few of them that need to be knocked off," grins Peter Jackson.

That title change – ditching 'There And Back Again' in favour of something altogether more epic – should be a big enough hint that the third installment aims to be the most impactful of the three, with Jackson compelled to rename it the first time he viewed a rough cut.

For anyone who hasn't been 'spoiled' by J.R.R. Tolkien's original tome – and wants to go into the final film cold – all you need to know is that the titular battle includes Dwarves, Elves, Men of Dale and a whole heap of Goblins fighting over the treasure that Smaug's been cosying up with inside the Lonely Mountain. So the outcome will impact on all corners of Middle-earth.

Despite the necessarily enormous scale, Jackson's not going for a 'bigger is better' approach when it comes to comparisons with *The Return Of The King*'s legendary skirmish. "I'm sure, in >>

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How not to train your dragon: Gandalf (Ian McKellen) and Bard (Luke Evans); (below) Smaug takes to the air.

Rank and file: Bard (Evans) readies the Men Of Dale; (inset) Azog (Manu Bennett) commands the orc army.

numbers, it's not going to be bigger than the Pelennor Fields battle," explains Jackson. "It's not the intention to make it bigger." Given the technology involved in bringing the sequences to the screen, it can feel particularly small scale behind the scenes. "Yeah, it's like there's three people and a box," jokes Orlando Bloom, returning as Elven archer Legolas aglongside the other new cast of *The Desolation Of Smaug*.

Ironically, some of the highest tech has also allowed PJ to return to his low-fi filmmaker roots. "When we do an animation of a sequence in a battle, say you've got 500 of these guys climbing up a wall and something smashes through, if we do a 20-30-second piece of animation or performance capture on that, I can then walk into a stage, and I can film it myself with a virtual camera. I'm filming all the battle stuff single-handedly, just like my Super 8 days. I get to actually be right in the midst of this huge battle, filming it myself like a combat cameraman."

And while the scale might be huge, Jackson isn't looking at it as just one sequence. "I don't really think of it as a battle, or a self-contained thing," he explains. "It's a storyline with all of our characters that is continuing and developing all the way through. It's still part of the storytelling of the film." It'll be against this backdrop that all of the characters will come into focus, as their fates in the future of Middle-earth are doled out. "Just about everybody ends up in different ways participating in this major battle at the end of the movie," says the director. "You're always just thinking of the arcs and the characters."

So all in all, expect a darker, grittier affair than the comparatively cheery previous parts. "The progression of the tone is what you would expect it to be," explains Jackson. "Things just start to get darker and darker as the stakes [*go up*] and the screws get tighter and tighter. It's got a nice thriller kind of pace to it."

And the final role that the battle will serve is linking up Jackson's entire Middle-earth saga. "I think it's going to be the most emotional, the most tense, of the three – I think it's my favourite of the three to be honest," admits the director. "But when you get to the end of it, I think it is going to feel like it's the right time to hand over to *The Fellowship Of The Ring*, it'll just feel like we've gone on that journey. Because I was always very much aware of them being a six-film set..." **MM**

ETA 12 DECEMBER *The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies* opens this winter.

A PETER JACKSON

The director on what could follow The Hobbit...

Will we ever see a longer cut of *The Lord Of The Rings* trilogy?
There are a few scenes that haven't been seen, but not many... There was an Arwen and Aragorn scene when they were younger, when they first met. Viggo looked like he was 12 years old, without the help of computers. Amazing. There are a few scenes. I don't know, we might try to put them back in. It's a big logistical thing that no one's quite got their head around. If there's enough interest from people... maybe they will.

Will you ever adapt *The Silmarillion*?
J.R.R. Tolkien sold the film rights to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord Of The Rings* in the late '60s, and *The Silmarillion* wasn't even written by then. It was written partly by him, and his son finished it after his death. The film rights have never been sold, and the estate don't have any interest in discussing it, so that's the situation: it's not as obtainable as *The Hobbit* and *Rings* were.

What will you do next?
The one thing that Fran [*Walsh*] and I want to do is tell some New Zealand stories. *Heavenly Creatures* was the last time we did it, so we are developing a couple of New Zealand-themed stories. But there's other projects as well. I don't have a five-year plan. I don't have a two-year plan. I've always just liked being organic and just figuring it out as I go.

REX

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Apocalypse now (main) director George Miller (right) with Charlize Theron; (below) Tom Hardy as Max Rockatansky

FIRST WORD!

On the road

MAD MAX: FURY ROAD | Director George Miller on getting the franchise's motor running again.

George Miller has debuted the first full-throttle footage from his return to the post-apocalyptic world of Mad Max (and it's since racked up millions of views online). With Tom Hardy replacing Mel Gibson in the driving seat, here's everything we know about the upcoming 'revisit'...

BACK ON THE ROAD

Miller describes the new film as "a 100-minute chase," with *Fury Road* set to be a lean, mean affair. "During that chase, you discover the characters, their relationships and the backstory. And because of that, it's closest to *Mad Max 2*."

KEEPING IT REAL

According to the director, the film "plays around in real-time," which also ties into the stripped back aesthetic. "There's so much noise [*in the real world*], it's hard to know what the truths are. By taking that reduced world [*of the film*], you can get down to much more elemental human behaviour."

CHARISMATIC QUALITY

For the director, it was the ability to be loveable and dangerous that links Hardy and original star Mel Gibson. "There is that quality: that paradoxical thing that gives these actors charisma. The moment I saw Tom and engaged with him, it felt to me like Mel did all those years ago."

GIBSON WON'T BE BACK

"Well, Mel's not in it," admits Miller bluntly. "Not even in a mask. But we did talk about the movie in the early 2000s when he was going to be in it." One familiar face will return, though. "Hugh Keays-Byrne [*who plays Toecutter in the first film*] – he plays Immortan Joe in this movie. He wears a mask through the whole movie."

GIRL POWER

With a name like Furiosa, you expect Charlize Theron's character to be a badass. "She's essentially a female road warrior," explains Miller. "But unlike Max, she has purpose. Max is running from his past and his better nature, so he wants to be alone. She's very strong. We wanted someone who's unmistakably a woman. She's a hardcore warrior."

TO THE EDGE

In terms of behind-the-scenes tecg, much has changed since the original trilogy. "We had an instrument called 'The Edge'," explains Miller. "It's a high-powered four-wheeled drive. It's got a stunt driver and it's got two guys with toggles. One works the camera and the other works the arm and you drive among the stunts."

KEEPING IT LO-FI

Despite the tech behind the camera, there are certain restrictions within the movie's world. "Anybody working on any of the designs of the vehicles had rules about what they could work with. You've got to insist the vehicle is more old-school. It can't depend too much on computer chips because there's no one to fix them."

WHAT ACTUALLY IS FURY ROAD?

"It's not a reboot, or a sequel," muses Miller. "The best description I have is a revisit. The world is very elemental, very spare. The simplest way to describe it is a 'western on wheels'." **MM**

ETA 15 MAY 2015 ***Mad Max: Fury Road*** **opens next year.**

EXCLUSIVE!

Dark side

DOMHNALL GLEESON | The Irish actor is on the rise, effortlessly switching between edgy indies like bleak masterpiece *Calvary* and huge blockbusters. Next up? Star Wars...

"I discovered that I don't deal with boredom very well," laughs Domhnall Gleeson, chatting to *Buzz* on a short break from directing a music video. On a week off from filming, it seems he just couldn't sit still.

In fact, the 31-year-old Irish actor has been keeping so busy with quality projects, that he'd probably be one of the world's most recognisable stars if his output wasn't so varied, and his demeanour so unshowy. You might remember him from *About Time*, *Dredd* or *Anna Karenina*, but earlier this year he pulled a complete 180° as cannibal/rapist/paedophile/murderer Freddie Joyce in a brief but scintillating turn in *Calvary*, starring opposite his father Brendan in one pivotal scene.

"You're always interested most by the thing you haven't done before," he offers, on why he went fo[illegible] "Y[illegible] harder [illegible] oftentime[illegible] things that a[illegible]

It certainly [illegible] the reward. After [illegible] and *Frank*, Gleeson a[illegible] "'Wouldn't it be great to [illegible] a little bit more and go somew[illegible] morally kind of compromising?' And then [*Calvary*] just came out of nowhere. It has made a big difference, certainly in terms of the scripts I've been getting."

It looks like variety will continue to be the key in Gleeson's future. "[*Calvary*] was a big film in scope, in terms of what it was about and in terms of the quality. Similarly with something like *Ex Machina*, and then similarly with *Star Wars*, they're all great, just in different ways."

Gleeson admits that he only found out he'd bagged the role in *Episode VII* just before going into *that* tableread. "It was one of those experiences that kind of can't be explained, particularly with the original guys [*there*]... everything about it was exciting," he grins. "I just couldn't stop smiling."

While he doesn't even get to keep hold of a script – "imagine leaving that on the Tube!" – Gleeson feels in pretty safe hands with J.J. Abrams. "He's a really good director, and I think that goes across the board," says Gleeson. "He's amazing at the action things, but he's also very good with the actors."

Although he looks set to be busy for the foreseeable, not least with Angelina Jolie's awards favourite *Unbroken*, there's still lots of territory Gleeson wants to explore. "I'd love to do a film noir, that would be a massive thing for me," he enthuses. "But I'm just trying to take the opportunities as they come." **MM**

***Calvary* is out now on Blu-ray and DVD. *Star Wars: Episode VII* opens in December 2015.**

SARAH DUNN/AUGUST, PA PHOTOS

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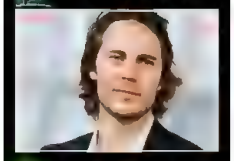
RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

What's stopping, what's starting in movieland...



After two box-office busts, Taylor Kitsch is looking to take the lead in the US remake of Gareth Evans' *The Raid*, with *Expendables III*'s Patrick Hughes directing and Frank Grillo also starring.

King Kong will be beating his chest once more in *Skull Island*. Joe Cornish has been linked to this possible prequel from Legendary Pictures. Could this mean a cross-over with *Godzilla*?

Richard Linklater has dropped out of *The Incredible Mr. Limpet* in favour of directing a more personal project. *That's What I'm Talking About* is a spiritual sequel to *Dazed And Confused*: "If *Dazed* was high school, this is my college."

Pride And Prejudice And Zombies is finally moving forward, having bagged some British talent in leads Lily James and Sam Riley. The former's getting her teeth into something less civilised after *Downton Abbey* and *Cinderella*.

There'll likely be no Aragorn-style heroics from Viggo Mortensen in comedy-drama *Captain Fantastic*, but he does lead an impressive roster including Frank Langella, Kathryn Hahn and Steve Zahn. **JA**

Head hunters: Rupert Friend as Agent 47 and (below) Zachary Quinto as John Smith.

FIRST LOOK!

Game on

HITMAN: AGENT 47 | Rupert Friend stars as the re-'Bourne' videogame antihero.

While the last *Hitman* didn't do anything to improve the reputation of videogame movies, the latest adaptation is differentiating itself in more ways than one...

For starters, there's *Homeland* star Rupert Friend in the title role, sporting a stubbly bonce and a new numerical tattoo. Footage revealed at Comic-Con showed the taciturn assassin in action, escaping from an interrogation room and drawing back his coat to reveal that he's armed to the hilt, *Matrix*-style.

There was also tons of slo-mo gunplay, angry SWAT teams, and a helicopter colliding with a skyscraper: it seems like debut director Aleksander Bach has the slick visuals down, making effective use of the Berlin and Singapore locations.

Another key player is *Star Trek*'s Zachary Quinto, who plays a version of series regular John Smith. "The character's more complicated than the name..." he deadpans. "I tend to respond to characters that have more going on than meets the eye."

The sometime Spock is keen to big up *Agent 47*'s major selling points too. "The scale and the scope and the style of this film is all really dynamic and exciting, but it's rooted in the relationships between these characters." **MM**

ETA 20 MARCH 2015 ***Hitman: Agent 47*** **opens next year.**

EXCLUSIVE!

Outside the box

THE BOXTROLLS | Stop-motion animation studio Laika made Coraline and ParaNorman, now Buzz gets a behind-the-scenes look at their latest creepy creation.

Laika have a taste for the unusual. Their newest film, *The Boxtrolls*, is in keeping with that ghoulish tradition, telling the story of a young boy, Eggs, adopted by the titular, underground-dwelling, junk-collecting beasties. Here, the creators and cast talk *Buzz* through the hand-crafted insanity of staging a stop-motion epic.

WATERWORKS

Graham Annable (co-director): We used a lot of VFX and a lot of 'practical' throughout. It was always dictated by what fit the style of the film best. And in that particular instance [*the water in the sewer*], it made sense to use practical effects, and those guys came up with two huge pieces of ripple glass that move opposite to each other. It created this perfect effect of caustic lighting on everything. We probably couldn't have achieved the same feel or effect [*with CGI*].

MODEL BEHAVIOUR

Anthony Stacchi (co-director): We had 200 puppets. There had to be multiples of single puppets.
Travis Knight (Laika president and CEO): There were 28 Eggs puppets. So they're not individual characters, but it's the most puppets we've ever made for any of our films.
GA: I think *Coraline* had an option of about 207,000 possible facial expressions. Eggs, our hero, has 1.4m expressions.
AS: 20,000 discrete objects were built, 79 sets and 26 different locations.

TAKING CONTROL

TK: If you can imagine 60 to 100 animators on a CG film, how much actual footage can they be producing? It's not a lot. On our film, we have half to a quarter of that. Each animator does more. We do more with less. One of the things we brought to it is that animators own entire chunks of the film. They own the sequences. By that, the animators kind of know the thing backwards and forwards. They know the arc and the emotion of the scene.

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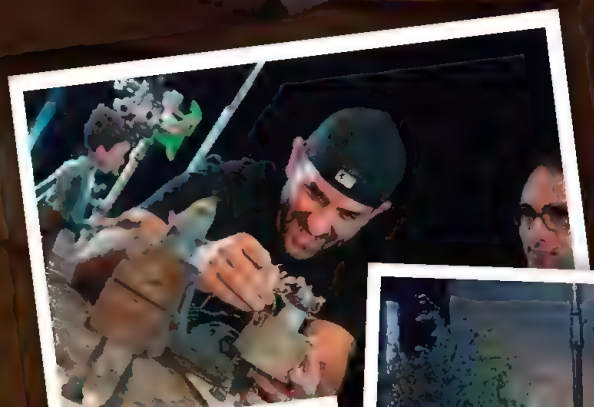
'The animators know the arc and emotion of the scenes'
TRAVIS KNIGHT

CHARACTER ACTORS

Elle Fanning (Winnie): Winnie's nine years old. She has crazy red hair and she's definitely spoiled. But she is looking for someone to listen to her because her dad loves cheese way more than he cares about his daughter.
Isaac Hempstead-Wright (Eggs): Eggs is a plucky, brave 11-year-old boy who thinks he's a Boxtroll. He's one of these mythological feral children who are raised in isolation from humanity.
EF: When I got the script, it came with a big book of drawings and designs. It's so weird not knowing what you're going to look like in a film. They're the experts. You just have to trust them completely.

VILLAINOUS VOICING

Ben Kingsley (Snatcher): Archibald Snatcher is a social climber. It's as if he spends a lot of his energy trying to join that club that doesn't want him to join. He therefore invents an enemy... In order to get that voice to come from a different part of me, I did most of my recording reclining. So they rigged up the microphone so I could be completely [*relaxed*] — not a tense bone in my body. It did help a lot.



BEAUTIFUL CREATURES

GA: How did we make ugly characters loveable? I think ugly's in the eye of the beholder, personally.

MIXING IT UP

TK: One of the things I love about the studio, is it's a gumbo of different production techniques that go back 100 years. There's stuff we've taken from the theatre and the stage. There's stuff we've taken from 2D animation, from stop-motion, and then from new and invented technologies and CG and other things. We take all those things together, and whatever makes the most sense to bring to life in the best way, that's what we do. It's all those things living and working together that make these films look like they do.

SPREADING THE WORD

TK: We want to show the world: this is how this magic is made. It's old-school movie magic. We think the process of making it is in some ways as inspiring as the films themselves. All those things inspire aspiring animators. You can go on the internet and find out how these things are done. You can use a webcam or a digital camera. You can download a piece of software from the internet and figure out how to do it. If that stuff was around when we were kids? I don't know. It'd probably still only be like 40 guys... [*laughs*] It's the dorkiest way to make a movie... **MM**

***The Boxtrolls* opens next month.**

Chilled-out entertainer: Brent is back.

FIRST WORD!

Out of office

While *The Office* hasn't been on air for more than a decade, **DAVID BRENT** never really went away. The cringe clown – Ricky Gervais' crowning achievement – has been spotted on charity specials and live musical tours. Now he's staging a full-on comeback in a movie, no doubt inspired by the success of TV-to-big-screen hits from the likes of *The Inbetweeners* and *Mrs. Brown's Boys*.

Fittingly, the film – called *Life On The Road* – will be a mockumentary, following Brent as he embarks on a UK tour (financed by himself). Ploughing all of his money into the venture, Brent sees it as akin to Scorsese shooting the Stones. And given that Gervais has admitted to being inspired by American mock-docs, it feels right for Brent to be returning with a faux-road movie. "*Spinal Tap* is an influence on the *The Office*..." admitted Gervais. Let's hope he turns the cringe factor all the way up to 11. **MM**

ETA TBC *Life On The Road* goes into production in 2015.

BUZZ What do you feel the real ending of *Silent Hill* was?
SEAN BEAN It was a dream. I didn't die? That's why I don't remember.

Film quotes pose as questions. Film stars try to cope. In the crosshairs this month: **David Morrissey**

You talkin' to me?
Yes I'm talking to *Total Film*, and I'm talking about *The Walking Dead* as well, which is the love of my life at the moment.

Do you feel lucky, punk?
If you'd showed me my life when I was starting out, when I was 18, I'd have bitten your hand off for half of it. It's hard work, but I feel lucky every day.

You talk the talk. Do you walk the walk?
I try to look at all my characters from an empathetic eye. But I also have my own production company, so I guess that's a bigger part of walking the walk – putting my own money where my mouth is!

You can either surf or you can fight...
When I did *Basic Instinct 2* I had a few surfing lessons in Malibu. I never got on the board – it just smacked me in the head. Surfing isn't for me but neither is fighting. I actually wanted to be a boxer for about five minutes – until someone hit me in the face.

What's the last thing that you do remember?
I was asked to read a Wilfred Owen poem at Westminster Abbey for this service to commemorate WW1. To be there with the choir singing, in the Abbey... And then lighting the giant searchlight like the Batman signal. I'll never forget it.

'I don't think we know our true character until we are tested'

You ever have that feeling where you're not sure if you're awake or still dreaming?
My life is full of 'pinch yourself' moments. I watched *Batman Begins* with my youngest son the other day and I was telling him about the first movie I did with Michael Caine. I was just supposed to knock on a door and stand there whilst he said a few lines – but all I could hear in my head on set was 'THAT'S MICHAEL CAINE!' I never want to lose that feeling.

Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?
I did dance around a fire pit in South Africa once. I have a charity called CAST, and we take drama workshops to children all around the world. Everyone was laughing at me for doing Dad dancing! Music is really important to me though. I make a playlist for every character I do. The Governor listens to a lot of loud rock...

If I'd known the world was ending, I'd have brought better books.
I don't think we know our true character until we're tested. It's easy to condemn people from a distance, but nobody knows what they'd do if the world was ending. But if it *was*, I'd probably bring my wife's books! **PB**

ETA | 29 SEPTEMBER *The Walking Dead The Complete Fourth Season* is out on DVD and Blu-ray next month.

Zombie time: as The Governor with co-star Martinez (Jose Pablo Cantillo).

INFPHOTO.COM

Questions taken from *Taxi Driver, Dirty Harry, Full Metal Jacket, Apocalypse Now, Memento, The Matrix, Batman, The Walking Dead*

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EXCLUSIVE!

Sad romance

LOVE, ROSIE | Sam Claflin and Lily Collins team up for a decade-spanning drama with heaps of heart...

They're both in their twenties, have Hollywood at their feet and know a thing or two about starring in big-budget epics, but with *Love, Rosie*, Sam Claflin and Lily Collins are getting intimate as star-crossed best buds Alex and Rosie. Expect this to set hearts a-fluttering and hankies a-hootin'...

When did the two of you first meet?

Lily Collins: Christian [*Ditter, director*] got us together in Soho over a year ago and he had us sit in a room and stare at each other. It was quite strange.

Sam Claflin: It was really intense. For a first meeting with somebody it was really strange.

LC: Very jarring.

SC: We sat so close to each other.

LC: But it was so awesome because right away we had this shared intense experience. We'd already invaded each other's personal space, so things could not get...

SC: ...any weirder. It was the most intense chemistry read I've ever had.

How much did you both relate to your characters in *Love, Rosie*?

SC: I think I am Alex.

LC: I think I am Rosie!

SC: It's so insane. I doubt I'll ever play somebody so close to me. I didn't know where I was ending and Alex was starting.

LC: I never felt like I was playing anything, it was just happening.

What was the most awkward moment during filming?

LC: Oh God, check out the scene where the condom gets lost. Or the mirror scene. That was in the smallest bathroom in history with five men and myself crouching over a mirror. That was on the second week of filming. That was pretty awkward.

SC: Yeah!

LC: I will say though, I fought to keep that in.

SC: Really?

LC: I just thought it was such a funny, awkward moment... The more awkward the better.

How did you find working with the babies?

SC: I had one day and it was a nightmare.

LC: The baby didn't like you at all! Oh my God, the second she came in...

SC: I love kids, so I was like, 'I'm gonna go say hello.'

LC: ...she started bawling her eyes out!

SC: Every time I walked into a room, the baby would start screaming!

What have you got coming up next?

LC: I can't speak much about it just because it's a very lock and key situation, but I did just finish shooting with Warren Beatty. It's 1950s Hollywood, sexual repression... It was incredible; an amazing cast of people that I respect, an older generation of actors. Some of them only work on specific types of film and I learned more in the last five months than I could've in film school.

SC: What can I say about *The Riot Club*? I remember texting Lily a picture...

LC: You were bloody and disgusting!

SC: I had hair extensions in, covered in blood. I was like 'Hey! This is me!' I've seen the film recently and it's very, very dark. My wife and my publicist, who have seen *The Riot Club*, hated me, and then they watched *Love, Rosie* the day after and were like, 'We love you!'

LC: That's so great, though.

SC: So to have this, then *Riot Club* and then *Hunger Games: Mockingjay*, it's a busy time.

LC: Yeah, he's not popular at all... **MM/JW**

ETA | 22 OCTOBER ***Love, Rosie* opens next month.**

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FIRST WORD!

School of shock

GOOSEBUMPS | Jack Black prepares for some family-friendly scares

Remember the Goosebumps books from when you were a kid? Well, the upcoming movie adaptation isn't based on one of R.L. Stine's chillers. Instead it casts Jack Black as the oddball writer himself, who finds his town overrun by creatures that have escaped from the pages of his tomes.

FRANKEN-STINE

From the off, don't expect *Goosebumps* to be a straight biopic. "We didn't want to do it without [*Stine's*] consent," says Black. "I told him, I can't play you like you are. I need him to be sinister. So don't be like, 'You don't look and sound like him Jack, you blew it dude!'"

FRIGHT NIGHT

Like the source material, the film will tread a fine line between scares and laughs. "The books are legitimately scary and really funny, and we tried to capture that," explains director Rob Letterman (*Gulliver's Travels*). "We made sure that it was for everybody," adds Black.

PLAYING DUMMY

Both Black and Letterman name *Night Of The Living Dummy* as their favourite *Goosebumps* story, and evil puppet Slappy will be the movie's big bad. "Slappy is the ringleader of all of our monsters," teases Black. "He's kind of R.L. Stine's dark side."**MM**

ETA 14 AUGUST 2015 ***Goosebumps*** **opens next year.**

THE SHORT LIST

The best British comedy films...

1 KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS (1949)

Ealing's masterpiece – a satirical study of the British class system disguised as a black comedy about an heir bumping off the seven people (all played by Alec Guinness!) in his way.

2 LIFE OF BRIAN (1979)

The Monty Python team strip back the surrealism for their tightest and most coherent script, only for it to be a savage satire on organised religion. Very naughty boys.

3 WITHNAIL & I (1987)

Bruce Robinson's semi-autobiographical comedy sees two unemployed actors (Richard E. Grant and Paul McGann) drink their way across the Lake District.

4 DR. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB (1964)

A litmus test for defining "British," Stanley Kubrick's satire is the definitive film about U.S. military madness during the Cold War... yet it was filmed in England, and his two MVPs are Brits: Peter Sellers and production designer Ken Adam.

5 BORAT (2006)

Sasha Baron-Cohen takes his Kazakh interviewer Borat Sagdiyev, to the United States – where a series of unscripted encounters with real-life Americans reveals their prejudices. **SK**

For more great British comedies, go to totalfilm.com/the-short-list

HINDSIGHT CORNER!

JAMES BUCKLEY

The Inbetweeners 2 (2014)

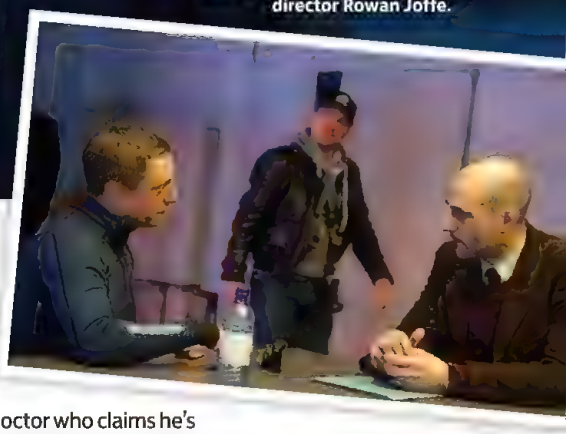
August 2011 "I don't really think there's much scop for a sequel. I'm not sure where it can go."

January 2014 "We're done. We won't do any more of *The Inbetweeners*. I was so surprised we did a second one. But I don't see how we can top this one."

EXCLUSIVE!

Anatomy of a thriller

Memory stick: Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth in *Before I Go To Sleep*, and (below) Mark Strong with director Rowan Joffe.



BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP | Director Rowan Joffe talks Buzz through his rules for constructing a dark mystery

LOVE YOUR SOURCE MATERIAL

"I wanted to do it with all my heart about 40 pages in," says Rowan Joffe of adapting *Before I Go To Sleep* for the screen. S.J. Watson's novel tells the tale of Christine, a woman unable to hang on to new memories for longer than a day following a traumatic incident in her past. For Brit Joffe – writer-director of 2010's *Brighton Rock* redux – the connection was personal as well as visceral: his own mother suffered amnesia following a brain haemorrhage. "What hooked me was when the book shifts from being a realistic portrait of a woman with a brain injury into a psychological thriller, and then back again."

SOLVE THE STORY PUZZLE

"Novelists can get away with things that screenwriters can't," notes Joffe. "Movie audiences demand more realism. If they notice errors, it bumps them out of investing in the story." For the filmmaker, that meant working out how to smooth out some of the rough edges – although the book's most obvious stumbling block was avoided by having Christine record her observations in a video rather than written diary, giving us vital clues to her fragmented world.

DRAW FROM UNEXPECTED WELLS

"Our film will inevitably be compared to *Memento*," says the filmmaker, "but even more of an influence were movies like *50 First Dates* and *Groundhog Day* because of the way they speak to the repetitiousness we all sometimes feel: 'Oh god, another day...'" Joffe also took cues from Hitchcock's *Spellbound* and *Dial M For Murder*: the former for its iffy doctor-patient relationship; the latter for mostly containing its thrills within a single house setting.

NAB AN A-LIST CAST

Joffe was eager to see Kidman play a type of woman she's not associated with – fragile, susceptible, ordinary – while simultaneously exploiting the starry chemistry at his disposal. "When you put Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth on camera together, they remind me of Hitchcock's classic pairings," he says. "They have that same elegance."

KEEP THE AUDIENCE GUESSING...

Christine is caught between two men, both potentially nefarious: Ben (Firth), the husband she no longer knows, and Dr. Nash (Mark Strong), the doctor who claims he's helping her to unlock her memory. The film hinges on one fundamental: which one should she (*mis*)trust? "I felt that the more affable Mark's character was, the less the audience would trust him," says Joffe. As for Firth, "Ben's martyrdom is almost heroic. You look at this couple and feel that they're locked in a prison. That in itself comes to feel sinister."

...WHILE ATTEMPTING TO SIDESTEP CLICHE

To keep the audience agitated, *Before I Go To Sleep* houses its share of "BOO!" jump shocks. They're in the playbook for any psychological thriller, but how do you stop them from feeling cheap? Use them sparingly for one, but Joffe also soothed his conscience with personal experience. "One symptom of my mum's brain injury was extreme sensitivity to light and noise. My rule was: Everything is permissible if it serves the character." **MMu**

ETA | 5 SEPTEMBER *Before I Go To Sleep* opens this month.

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Make it funky

GET ON UP | Godfather of Soul James Brown gets the movie treatment. Don't expect a solemn, stuffy biopic.

"I kinda departed from wanting to see biopics because they have a tendency to become quite predictable," says *The Help* director Tate Taylor, who's recently turned his hand to, erm, James Brown biopic *Get On Up*.

So what convinced him then? "I like complex characters, and there are so few," he explains. "I realised that I was making a complex, psychological adventure in the brain of a genius, and all that entails." Brown's life was packed to the hilt with turbulent episodes, from era-defining musical highs to drug-fuelled lows. Rather than opting for a straight biopic, or choosing to focus on just one period in his life, Taylor took a completely different approach that was inspired by Brown's own style.

"The non-linear structure kind of represents James Brown's life and his concerts," muses Taylor. "James Brown concerts would start with one song and immediately it would turn into a ballad and then back to a funk, so you had to stay on your toes and I wanted our movie to be that way."

For a film that rests so heavily on the electrifying charisma of its protagonist, casting was never going to be simple, with Taylor insisting that he'd just not have made the movie if he didn't find the perfect actor. It fell to Chadwick Boseman (who has biopic form playing baseball player Jackie Robinson in *42*) to step up to the mic. "I had reservations about James Brown in general, that he's such a complicated person to play," drawls Boseman. "I knew none of it would be an easy task."

With the "insane" shoot covering 96 locations in 49 days also reflecting the breakneck pace of Brown's style, it helped that Taylor also got a boost of rock'n'roll cred behind the scenes, with producer Mick Jagger supplying energy and authenticity. "What was great about Mick was that he did the work," smiles Taylor. "When we started working together, the Jagger fell off the end of his name." **MM**

ETA | 21 NOVEMBER ***Get On Up*** **opens this autumn.**

Fact File

- Most of the live performance sequences use archive audio tracks from James Brown's own concerts.
- Dan Aykroyd – who plays talent agency manager Ben Bart – appeared alongside the real Brown in *The Blues Brothers* (and its sequel) and *Doctor Detroit*.
- Brown's nicknames include the Godfather of Soul, Mr Dynamite, and the Minister of the New New Super Heavy Funk.

Q&A CHADWICK BOSEMAN

The actor on getting into character as the hardest-working man in showbusiness...

On the dance moves...
It was especially intense because there wasn't a lot of time. It was two months of intense dancing [*in preparation*]. I had five hours a day of official rehearsal with the choreographer and then when I went home I would work on what we did that day because I could never make the choreographer happy.

On the wigs...
Sometimes it was annoying because the wigs take some time to put on and you're doing all of these performances with the wig on and it's not that cool! It's *cooool*, but not temperature-wise. It was fun, it helped to get into the whole thing, to lose yourself in it, putting on a mask. I enjoyed that.

On staying in character...
You don't want to present too much of yourself and lose sight of the focus. When I got in the car to go to work, everyone would start calling me Mr Brown for the rest of the day. If somebody called me anything else, they were in trouble!

RIP

O Captain! My Captain!

ROBIN WILLIAMS 1951-2014 | Remembering the legendary funnyman through his own wit and wisdom.

Robin Williams' death was met with an outpouring of grief from generations of fans. Having been a celebrated comic and actor for several decades, chances are that if you like movies or stand-up comedy, you'd probably have been touched by at least one (although more likely many) of Williams' performances. Veering from madcap humour to quiet gravity – often in the same skit – the breadth of his ability was almost endless. And his way with words means we'll be quoting him for years to come.

ON CAREER HIGHS AND LOWS
"Your career is cyclical. If you're lucky, you have people who'll keep you grounded so you don't take the highs or lows too seriously."

ON DIVORCE
"Ah yes, divorce, from the Latin word meaning to rip out a man's genitals through his wallet."

ON HUMOUR
"When in doubt, go for the dick joke."

ON DRUGS
"Cocaine is God's way of saying that you're making too much money."

ON MADNESS
"You're only given one little spark of madness. You mustn't lose it."

ON MRS. DOUBTFIRE
"Some people were horribly offended by that and other people went, 'Thank God, that got me through my divorce.'"

ON ALADDIN'S GENIE
"I was just doing the scripted lines and I asked, 'Do you mind if I try something?' and then 18 hours of recording later, they had the Genie."

ON GOOD WILL HUNTING
"It's more than a movie for some people, which is kind of wonderful."

ON WINNING AN OSCAR
"It's weird – it lasted for about a week, maybe two. For the first day it's like, 'Yay, *Good Will Hunting*, way to go!' A couple of days later it's, 'Yay, that movie you won an Oscar in...' And then a couple of weeks later: 'Hey, Mork!'

BRYCE DUFFY/CORBIS OUTLINE

PAYING TRIBUTE

Stars mark Williams' passing.

"Robin was a lightning storm of comic genius and our laughter was the thunder that sustained him. He was a pal and I can't believe he's gone." **STEVEN SPIELBERG**

"Robin Williams, the most astonishingly funny, brilliant, profound and silly miracle of mind and spirit, has left the planet. He was a giant heart, a fireball friend, a wondrous gift from the Gods. Now the selfish bastards have taken him back. Fuck 'em!" TERRY GILLIAM

"Let's remember the fiery genius, the long, long strings of laughter, then awe at the energy and the performances that lit up the room, the screen, the world." **TOM HANKS**

"I could not be more stunned by the loss of Robin Williams, mensch, great talent, acting partner, genuine soul." STEVE MARTIN

"Robin brought so much joy into my life and I will carry that joy with me forever. He was such a beautiful man. I was lucky to know him and I will never, ever forget him" **MATT DAMON**

"Thanks chief – for your friendship and for what you gave the world. Robin had a ton of love in him. He personally did so much for so many people. He made Matt and my dreams come true." **BEN AFFLECK**

"He was one of a kind. He arrived in our lives as an alien - but he ended up touching every element of the human spirit." BARACK OBAMA

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FLASHBACK

This month: Issue 99, March 2005

Let's do the time warp as we look back at classic issues of Total Film...

COVER STORY

Keanu Reeves jumps from the frying pan into the fire, following up his *Matrix* sequels with *Constantine*. "The fact that it's not in England, that he's not blond... Some people may never get over that," admits director Francis Lawrence.

While NBC is currently producing a more loyal TV adaptation, Reeves shrugged off the artistic license. "Yeah, I ditched the accent," he says. "But he is still the Constantine the *Hellblazer* fans love. He has the anger and wry sense of humour." Concludes Lawrence: "We've not made *Van Helsing*... It's not a straight-up popcorn movie." That, we can all agree on.

THE INSIDE SCOOP

We catch up with Bill Murray on the set of *The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou* ("I think this movie will be important," he says. "It's like *Apocalypse Now*"), then check out the 40 greatest pop stars who became half-decent actors (Sinatra, Cher, Wahlberg). Meanwhile, both Hilary Swank and Javier Bardem react to Oscar buzz surrounding *Million Dollar Baby* and *The Sea Inside*. "It's an honour," says Swank. "It's only a fucking movie" counters Bardem...

QUOTE ME ON THAT

"I came very close to doing [Bond]. I was offered it by the studio, but circumstances meant that it was pushed back.... I'm a real Bondaholic, but I think The Man From UNCLE will show Bond a few things." Matthew Vaughn

Buffy buddies Sarah Michelle Gellar and Charisma Carpenter scrap over playing Wonder Woman in the big screen adap. "It's my mission to be Wonder Woman!" vows Carpenter. Neither land the role.

Kevin Spacey celebrates being cast as Lex Luthor in *Superman Returns*. "The attraction for me was the chance to work with Bryan [*Singer*] again," he says.

Nicolas Cage is rumoured for the *Old Boy* remake. Almost a decade ahead of the Spike Lee film, *Total Film* imagines a less extreme Westernised version in which Cage bites off the head of a Twinkie.

John Lasseter jettisons rumours that Pixar is making *Finding Nemo 2*. "There are no plans for a sequel," he says. *Finding Dory* is due in July 2016...

The Rock is attached to a *He-Man* reboot, with John Woo rejuvenating the master of the universe. Fast forward to 2014 and Woo's long gone, but rumours abound that *Kick-Ass 2*'s Jeff Wadlow could be about to enter Castle Grayskull...

PHOTOSHOT

TF INTERVIEW KEVIN BACON

The actor talks characters, Wild Things and six degrees of Kevin Bacon

ON KEVIN BACON

"At my core, I'm a character actor. I'm drawn to projects that are dark, risky and extreme – but there's part of me that wants to kill the bad guy and get the girl and drive a fast car and kick some ass!"

ON WILD THINGS

"They called me up and said, 'Listen, the way we have to cut now, you're full frontal.' I said, 'Oh, well, how does it look?...' I was really shocked when everybody kept on about it after the movie's release."

ON SIX DEGREES

"Okay, here goes... Marlon Brando worked with Jack Nicholson on *The Missouri Breaks*; Nicholson worked with Bacon on *A Few Good Men*. Two degrees of separation. It ain't so hard..."

It Shouldn't Happen To A Film Journalist

Editor-at-Large Jamie Graham lifts the lid on movie journalism. This month: **onstage Q&As.**

On a sweltering weekend in mid-July, coated in sweat and grime in a gigantic field in Suffolk, I was hanging backstage of the Film And Music Tent at Latitude festival. The *Total Film* sizzle reel began to play inside the 900-capacity auditorium and I turned to our guest, *Berberian Sound Studio* director Peter Strickland, to offer a break-a-leg smile before we settled under the hot lights for a Q&A punctuated by clips of his new film, *The Duke Of Burgundy*. Only Peter wasn't there. He'd disappeared like a scene out of *The Vanishing*. Sweat dripped into my eyes and my sunburned neck turned a deeper shade of red.

Inside, the reel drew to a close and a voice from another dimension echoed back to me as the compère said, "Please welcome Jamie Graham and Peter Strickland." Applause faded to deafening silence. Shit. Seconds span out like days. And then... Peter came trotting around the corner of the toilet cubicles and we shuffled into the spotlight like it was all just a dramatic pause.

It could have been worse. Last year, at another outside event, an A-lister had also decided he needed to relieve his beer bladder as the introductions were being made, only the toilets were being cleaned. Hopping from foot-to-foot like a child, the star (his identity here protected) suggested an empty water bottle. Taking said item, he turned his back, obeyed nature's call and apologetically handed the brimming bottle to Editor-in-Chief Jane Crowther as we stepped before a whooping audience. Ah, the glamour...

Jamie (left) interviews Peter Strickland at Latitude.

'When the guest is lively and the audience buzzing they can be electric'

Urinary shortcomings aside, onstage Q&As are invigorating work. When the guest is a lively speaker, the audience is buzzing and the microphones work (I've had my share of tech travails), they can be electric, the energy bouncing between subject and audience and back again until the room thrums. Among the most satisfying I've hosted are Guillermo del Toro at the Odeon Leicester Square, *Searching For Sugar Man* enigma Sixto Rodriguez at the BFI (he then plugged in his guitar and performed three songs featured in the Oscar-winning doc) and a raucous Seann William Scott prior to an exclusive screening of *Goon*.

Less comfortable experiences were Tobe Hooper and Dario Argento before 1,000 horror hounds at FrightFest, the former too frazzled to relive much of his heyday ("So, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*..." I began. "It was a long time ago... I can't remember" came the balloon-popping response) and the latter struggling with his English, though he did stop-and-start his way through a hilarious anecdote about Rutger Hauer being found in a bush, in a compromising position, during the making of Dracula.

Good, bad or ugly, I've at least now got to a point where nerves aren't an issue. Doing my first onstage Q&A, I stumbled up the steps, failed to recover with any of the dignity displayed by Jennifer Lawrence at the 2013 Oscars and then developed an explosive case of strangulated hiccups. Trust me, no microphone has ever worked better than on that miserable night...

Next issue Jamie tackles appearing on radio and TV. For more misadventures follow: @jamie_graham9 on Twitter.

ILLUSTRATION: SIMON COOPER

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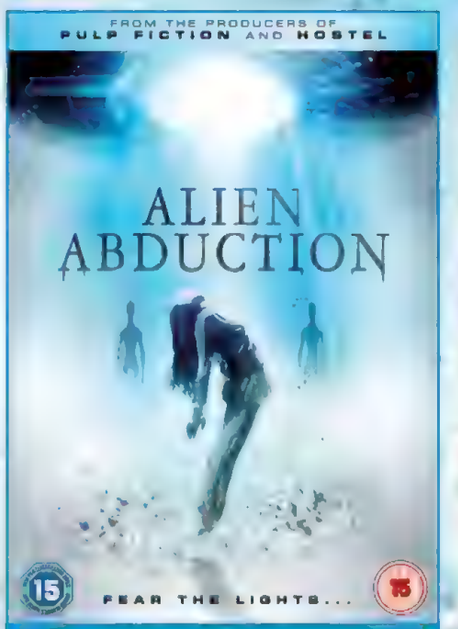

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This month's trending topics...

agenda

The One To Watch

Natalie Dormer is ready to rule

"I've been cast as the femme fatal quite a lot, but nothing could be further from the truth," grins Natalie Dormer. After landing her breakout role in raunchy TV romp *The Tudors*, the Brit actress is currently best known for another courtly role: *Game [illegible] Thrones*' arch manipulator Margaery T[illegible]

The ubiquity of the HBO hit aside, she's starting to reveal her diversity in a variety of film roles. "On the edge and [illegible] risky" is how Dormer describes her taste [illegible] movies, and it's evident in her choices; [illegible] supporting turns in *Rush* and *The Co[illegible]* prove that she's more than comfortable [illegible] an A-list set with a smart eye for [illegible]

Next up she's bringing an elem[illegible] [illegible]ne danger to the [illegible] and after that she's [illegible] [illegible] plains. [illegible] Capitol to join the rebellion."

As someone who follows Katniss into the field, Dormer gets to show off her action credentials, "carrying a gun and wearing big heavy army boots", not to mention shaving half her hair off for the Capitol chic look. Just don't expect her to bring the action back to Westeros. "It would be great if Margaery Tyrell could do a bit of a Katniss Everdeen and pick up a bow and arrow!" she laughs. "In my dreams!" **MM**

ETA | 19 SEPTEMBER ***The Riot Club*** **opens next month.** ***The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1*** **opens in November.**

MORTEN LAURSEN/CHILLI MEDIA

The need-to-know...

GHOSTBUSTERS 3

THE LAST OF US

Sam Raimi made an appearance at Comic-Con to announce a film version of critically acclaimed survival horror videogame *The Last Of Us*. Like a lot of its fans, Raimi admits it was the characters that drew him in. "It's just such a great story," he gushed. "It's going to be a great character journey." While there's no director in place yet, writer/director of the game Neil Druckmann is working on the script. "There's never been a great videogame adaptation" Druckman admits. "We're gonna work our asses off to try to make this great." No casting has been announced, but *Game Of Thrones*' Maisie Williams is already in talks for the role of Ellie.

ASSASSIN'S CREED

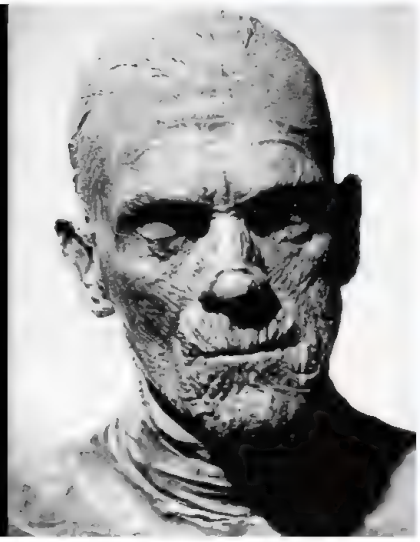
Another videogame movie with potential? Michael Fassbender's time-hopping adventure. "We want to respect the game," says Fassy. "But we also want to bring new elements and our own version of things that already exist."

JAMIE FOXX

Adding another biopic to his CV, Foxx will step into the ring to play Mike Tyson. With a script by Terence Winter (*The Sopranos, Boardwalk Empire, The Wolf Of Wall Street*), expect plenty of (almost) pent-up aggression.

UNIVERSAL MONSTERS

You know how *every* franchise is getting *Avengers*-style crossover treatments these days? Universal's classic monsters are the latest, with Alex Kurtzman (über-writer of *Star Trek, Transformers, The Amazing Spider-Man 2*) appointed as an overseer. He'll kick it off by directing the new take on *The Mummy*, co-written with new writing partner Chris Morgan.



KILL BILL: THE WHOLE BLOODY AFFAIR

The scale

ON FIRE

The Jungle Book
Andy Serkis and Jon Favreau are both working on adaptations, meaning Rudyard Kipling's never been hotter. Favs is ahead in the casting stakes (Bill Murray is Baloo!).

Chris Pratt
With *Guardians Of The Galaxy* rocking the box-office, there'll be no shortage of Pratt in the future, with *Jurassic World* director Colin Trevorrow reminding Twitter fans they'll see him battling dinos in 2015.

Sharknado
The gleefully silly sequel scored record viewing figures for Syfy, meaning a third installment is all but guaranteed. Tara Reid confirmed that part 3 is "definitely going to happen."

Studio Ghibli
The anime powerhouse has temporarily halted production. In the meantime, the studio will downsize and focus on managing its assets, with the possibility of new films uncertain.

Female-led superhero films
Marvel is too busy for a solo super-heroine just yet. "We're managing more franchises than most people," admitted Kevin Feige, "[*but*] I hope we do it sooner rather than later."

COOLING OFF

PA PHOTOS, REX

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The Talent

Maika Monroe has no fear.

The move from professional kitesurfing to acting isn't an obvious one, but Maika Monroe has done it in style. Her first role saw her opposite Zac Efron in *At Any Price* and she played Josh Brolin's girlfriend in *Labor Day*, but it's in new horror *The Guest* where she's making her mark. "What can I say?" the 21-year-old grins, "it's fun scaring people..."

Have you always loved horror films?
When I was growing up, I loved them. I remember watching *A Nightmare On Elm Street*, all of them. I just love being terrified. *The Shining* is my ultimate favourite. That was one of the first horror films I saw, and after that I was just addicted. My dad showed it to me when I was a kid, which may not have been good parenting, but I loved it.

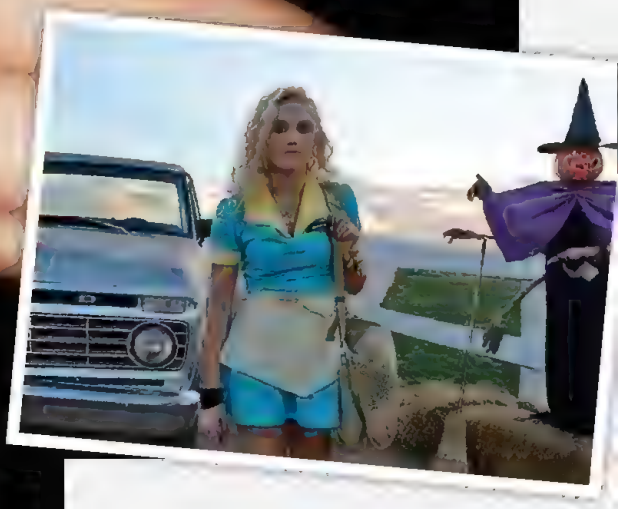
Which is easier, kitesurfing or acting?
Kiteboarding. You can go insane acting, so it's nice to have something to do during time off – it's a way to stay grounded.

What's coming up next for you?
Another horror film – *It Follows*. It's probably the hardest role I've ever done. It's very physically and mentally demanding. It's an indie horror film; it's not a slasher – it's very real. We take a group of teenagers and put them in an insane situation and see how they deal with it... **AL**

ETA | 5 SEPTEMBER 2014 ***The Guest*** **opens this month.**

'I love horror films. I just love being terrified'

TRUNK ARCHIVE



The Talent

Ben Schnetzer is heading off to Warcraft.

"It does feel kind of insane," admits 24-year-old Ben Schnetzer of his busy schedule, which is *so* busy that he's got not one but *two* films out this month – Brit gay drama *Pride* and Lone Scherfig's Bullingdon Club thriller *The Riot Club*. Schnetzer's also just shot Duncan Jones' massive videogame adap *Warcraft*: "I feel like I'd end up in Guantanamo if I said anything about it..."

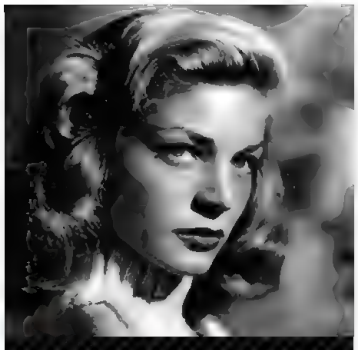
What can you tell us about *Pride*?
I play a guy called Mark Ashton. He was an activist who started a group called Lesbians And Gays Support The Miners. It was really grassroots, just him and his friends showing support for another community that was being marginalised.

Was your character in *The Riot Club* also based on a real person?
I watched a lot of footage of certain people who were part of the upper echelons of British society, but no, not one person in particular. We met a guy who was in the Bullingdon Club, so I did put a lot of anecdotes about that guy in my back pocket.

What can you tell us about *Warcraft*?
It was a hell of a trip! *Warcraft* was insanely fun. Duncan is just the coolest, nicest, most enthusiastic visionary. He brings an energy on set that makes you want to work no matter what. I would follow Duncan into battle! **MM**

ETA | SEPTEMBER *Pride* and *The Riot Club* both open this month. *Warcraft* opens in 2016.

'I would follow Duncan Jones into battle!'



Final whistle

Hollywood lost one of its most iconic stars when **LAUREN BACALL** died aged 89. Her film career spanned almost 70 years, and her name is synonymous with her sultry screen presence, and *that* voice (although her sharp wit meant she was never seen as just a sex symbol). Her first film role is arguably her most famous: in *To Have And Have Not* with Humphrey Bogart. This also marked the start of their love affair, which led to a marriage lasting until his death. In her later years she made interesting film choices, including *Dogville*, *Howl's Moving Castle* and *Birth*, ensuring she left a legacy worthy of her talent. **MM**

Plain talking

Learn the movie lingo

This month:

"Anachronism"

Remember when '70s hippies appeared in the background of *The Godfather*? Or when Post-Its turned up in *Almost Famous*? Those hippies and little yellow squares are *anachronisms* – things that show up despite being historically inaccurate. Want another? Everybody wears kilts in *Braveheart*, but kilts weren't invented until 400 years later...

ILLUSTRATION: GLEN BROGAN, KOBAL

Career injection

MELISSA MCCARTHY | Could a spot of drama help the Bridesmaids star prove she's more than just a comedy act?

Anyone who thinks they've got Melissa McCarthy's number should revisit a pre-*Bridesmaids* McCarthy number, pronto: *The Nines*. In John August's brain-scrambling triptych, she surprised repeatedly in multiple roles. Funny, sweet, commanding – her expressive features nailed every nuance needed even if the film was a mixed bag.

Lately, McCarthy hasn't been so surprising. Ever since her Oscar nom for *Bridesmaids*'s Megan, she's settled into a familiar type: the sweary, no-holds-barred woman-as-bulldozer. It's refreshing in an industry of polished female stars, true. But it's a type she could still calcify within.

In theory, McCarthy offers the best of two worlds. In studio-speak she's 'relatable'. Yet she's also blazingly charismatic as the type who can't keep a lid on their feelings if you nailed them down. "Hollywood wants to make women so perfect," McCarthy says. "Perfect hair. Perfect job. Perfect manners." As anyone who saw her spitting out flaming innuendos in *The Heat* knows, McCarthy roasts such stereotypes.

That much is welcome, but it's a shame her OTT pitch hasn't changed. Sure, she swore up a storm in *This Is 40*, then helped power *Identify Thief* and *The Heat* to solid box-office hauls. But alarm bells rang over the former's by-the-book clichés and the latter's over-played weight gags. And they rang again over recent reviews of *Mike & Molly*, the sitcom which plays to her sweeter strengths but started turning into 'The Melissa Show' post-*Bridesmaids*.

The ringing became louder for *Tammy*, where a coupling with Susan Sarandon offered both a promising screen pairing and a ready hook for a road movie. The international box-office catch of $88m could be worse for a $20m flick, but the film and its reviews fell short of hopes for a self-steered vehicle from McCarthy and husband Ben Falcone. With that letdown added to modest box office, the sense that McCarthy's scene-stealing schtick can't fuel a whole film starts to take hold.

It's too early to call time yet, but she's in a dicey position. More repeats of Megan's thunder could deliver diminishing returns. Retreats to a quieter approach could seem chastened, though the contrast might be welcome. She's exploring both fronts with upcoming comic (Paul Feig's *Spy*) and semi-dramatic (*St Vincent*) turns. Let's hope the numbers add up. **Kevin Harley**

FIVE POINT FIX...

1. Bridesmaids 2? Obvs, yes, but we'd only climb it like a tree if it broke fresh ground (Kristen Wiig has apparently turned down all offers for a sequel).
2. Play drama. *The Nines* proved she can do it: could upcoming *St Vincent* prove it again?
3. We like McCarthy obnoxious but her gentler TV persona would refresh her image on film.
4. We also like her loud but that expressive face speaks quiet volumes. Is *The Artist 2* happening?
5. How about a genre switch: could she help ground a horror, fantasy or sci-fi outing?

The Spotlight

Doc of ages

Album sales might be declining, but one form of music is thriving. Agenda raises a fist to the new golden age of the rock doc...

Front-row hands clutch at Nick Cave's thighs. The National's Matt Berninger forges a path through a crowd. Pulp's Jarvis Cocker shoots confetti from a crotch-level cannon. Bikini Kill's Kathleen Hanna rips rock machismo a new asshole. If you believe the pundits who declare "the death of the album" on a regular basis, the music industry is struggling. But one music-related form isn't. Having delivered the blaze of images above and more in 2014, the rock documentary is more daring than ever right now.

True, the 'rockumentary' offered some classic genre riffs in the 2000s. The combination of total exposure (sired by reality TV's example) with the influences of *This Is Spinal Tap* and its cringe-com offspring (*Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *The Office*) brought us fine docu-portraits of Anvil, Metallica, The Brian Jonestown Massacre and The Dandy Warhols: all good, all often hilarious.

Lately, a counter-riff has kicked in. Shane Meadows directed a contrast to the all-access documentary in 2013's *Made Of Stone*, a fan letter to the reunited Stone Roses often delivered from a polite distance. Meadows even turned the camera off after a band bust-up, a questionable decision but a surprise move in an era when the camera-phone is never off.

That combination of new methods and old passion is thriving. Florian Habicht's *Pulp: A Film About Life, Death And Supermarkets* resisted a talking-heads approach to Sheffield's lusty demi-legends. Instead, Habicht explored Pulp's ties to their hometown and rounded up a fascinating slew of fans to craft a composite portrait of band and context in Pulp's style.

In *Mistaken For Strangers*, Tom Berninger's film about his brother Matt's band The National, the *Tap*-ish clichés were inverted. As Tom went AWOL and Matt despaired, an eloquent portrait of dysfunctional bonds emerged, like a National song made into a film. Sini Anderson's *The Punk Singer*, meanwhile, upended the male emphasis of rock-docs to tell a story about riot grrrl agitator Kathleen Hanna's health battles.

INFLUENTIAL ROCK DOCS

1967 Bob Dylan tours Britain in DA Pennebaker's trailblazing *Don't Look Back*.

1970 The hippie dream dies. *Woodstock* and *Gimme Shelter* pay witness.

1978 Americana giants The Band splinter. Scorsese's *The Last Waltz* watches.

1979 *The Kids Are Alright* captures The Who's Keith Moon in disarray.

Sound choice: Jarvis Cocker in *Pulp: A Film About Life, Death And Supermarkets*, (below) Ian Brown in *Made Of Stone* and (opposite) Nick Cave and Kylie Minogue in *20,000 Days On Earth*

Cave Digging

Old Nick at the flicks...

Nick Cave's narrative powers, mood mastery, vivid language, outsider charisma and towering profile make him a movie natural. Duly, he's written, scored and appeared in them. His script work includes *Lawless*, *The Proposition* and the never-shot *Gladiator 2*. Cave cameo'd in Wim Wenders' German art-film, *Wings Of Desire* and his scores (co-composed with violinist Warren Ellis) ache across films including *The Road* and *The Assassination of Jesse James By The Coward Robert Ford*. His own American travails received fine docu-treatment in *The Road To God Knows Where*, which includes its own uncommon spectacle: Cave dancing to Madonna.

Top of the class is British artists Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's *20,000 Days On Earth*, a docu-riff on Nick Cave. Conceptualists whose previous work has included a re-enactment of David Bowie's final gig as Ziggy Stardust, Forsyth and Pollard avoid obvious strategies.

Narrative storytelling gives way to poetic voiceovers, psycho-analytical interludes, semi-staged encounters at Cave wingman Warren Ellis's "house" (not his real house) and semi-staged encounters (with Kylie Minogue, Ray Winstone and former bandmate Blixa Bargeld) in Cave's car. Life/creativity, fact/fiction and man/myth blur. Fifty years since Richard Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* juggled truth and stories to get to Beatlemania's heart, Forsyth and Pollard find new ways to do so with Cave.

The reason why might be the flipside to the reason why more comedic docs focus on less impressive musicians: it's because Cave is a pioneer, a trailblazing talent, in ways that Anvil may not be. And it's a reason bound up in Forsyth and Pollard's rejection of a gritty, reality-TV-ish approach in favour of something much more ambitious.

'The genre is more daring than ever'

"The thing with talent and reality shows is, they've elevated the idea that anyone can be a star – but we really watch because everyone *can't* do it," say the duo, communicating via email. "They're the closest thing we have to the old freak shows. But why waste your time poking fun at failure? We wanted to celebrate the remarkable. We wanted to try to make something substantial, maybe even meaningful, that seemed worth taking up our time, Nick's time and the money!"

As a result, Forsyth and Pollard avoid the shaky-cam, YouTube-era style of many modern docs. "Shooting from the same angle as CCTV or making your footage grainy does *not* inject honesty," they insist. "Whatever 'access' you're given, the moment you turn a camera on in a room people become performers in some form of fiction. We were definite about not wanting to hide the construct. We actually tried to heighten the dramatic and cinematic."

The results certainly look gorgeous, particularly for scenes shot in an archive of Cave memorabilia. "A huge amount of art direction went into it," they say. "We wanted to use every device that was available to us. In the archive scene we were trying to use the screen to illustrate the idea that memory is a warped, fragile thing, so we brought in lots of glass, lights, refractions and magnifiers. As the camera moves across the scene the image is distorted."

20,000 Days is not 'Cave unmediated': it doesn't presume to offer direct access to Cave's daily grind. But it does plug into more searching *truths* about creativity, identity and mortality. The result is a rich, far-reaching, surprise entry in a genre that often relies on the comedy of bands misbehaving. And it isn't alone in finding new stories to tap: incoming rock docs include James Hall and Edward Lovelace's *The Possibilities Are Endless*, an ambitious account of Scottish indie hero Edwyn Collins' post-stroke comeback.

"There's always room to be surprised," say Forsyth and Pollard of the rock-doc's future. "There are so many bands we'd love to see great films about, although there's probably only one that we'd want to make." They don't say who it is, but this much is sure: they and others have found fresh tunes to play. From here, the rock-doc's possibilities indeed look endless. **KH**

1991
Pop's Madg-esty blurs play-acting/reality for *In Bed With Madonna*.

2004
Two bands go to war in Ondi Timoner's druggy *Dig!*

2008
Failed but tenacious rockers Anvil receive touching, titter-some tribute.

2013
The Stone Roses wanna be adored. Shane Meadows provides.

Rob Lowe

The '80s wild child is still living life to the full...

He went to school with Charlie Sheen and Robert Downey Jr., received his first Golden Globe nom when he was 19, and was part of the '80s Brat Pack. Now 50, Rob Lowe's on the form of his life, carving out a nice line in TV roles, and scene-stealing supporting turns, most recently as Cameron Diaz's boss in *Sex Tape*...

What was it like shooting the cocaine scenes with Cameron Diaz in *Sex Tape*?
When I did those scenes with Cameron, I was like, 'Think back, Rob, to many a hotel night with a blonde actress... Oh yes, I can do this!' That was funny 'cos when we did that scene we'd actually been up for 13 hours, the sun was coming up... After a while I thought, 'This is a little bit like 1986...'

Did you get to keep the Disney paintings your character owns in the film?
Aren't they amazing? I don't know which one I like the most. Maybe Geppetto. *The Lion King* one's pretty great. I have no idea how they pulled it off, because Disney is notoriously tough. I'm just glad they did. They're so funny.

What's your secret to surviving for so long in the industry?
I think it's thinking about the right things. The right things are: the part, who's involved and then how does it affect your family life, because I think having a family's really important, and having a life outside show business. And that's it!

Face of Rob: (top to bottom)as Billy in *St. Elmo's Fire* (1985); as JFK in *Killing Kennedy* (2013); as Hank in *Sex Tape* (2014).

'I think incrementally we get smarter as we get older, if we pay attention'

What's the most important thing you've learnt?
Knowing when to leave the party is the finest art form there is. Whether it's leaving *The West Wing*, leaving the '80s party or leaving *Parks And Recreation*... I have an intrinsic sense of when to get out of dodge. It's really served me well. I try to keep listening to it.

Was there a turning point in your career?
It's a matter of growing up. I've been doing this since I was 15. You know more at 20, 25 and a lot more at 30. I think incrementally we get smarter as we get older, if we're paying attention.

Do you approach film and TV differently?
I don't. I see them the same. The acting technique is the same for the most part... I try to look at the role. Theatre is different. That's a different animal.

Are you becoming more fearless in your career choices as you get older?
Playing JFK [*in* Killing Kennedy], for me that's a big, iconic thing. To play JFK in America, if you fuck that up, you're gonna get dragged around. Those are big swings, man. I'm really proud of the last couple of years and the way people are responding to those roles. They're not easy choices, for sure.

Aren't you a bit young to have written your memoirs?
I'm a fan of movies, of actors. I'm also a fan of memoirs. I don't wanna be the old guy and this is my last hurrah. It's so dull. I wanna see someone write about their lives when they're living them.

Is fame difficult to get your head around?
That's something I've thought a lot about. People go, 'They have everything; they're rich, famous, why are they on drugs? They threw it all away!' The reason is that, intrinsically, we know it's not about us. It's about the audience and their relationship with a part or an article.

What advice would you give young stars like Justin Bieber?
I think at the end of the day there's this sneaking suspicion that all the bedlam has fuck all to do with his music. It happens every decade; there's someone who happens to be standing in the middle of the street to be run over by the adolescent girls. It has nothing to do with them. It's about *the audience*. It's like being hit by a train. **MM**

ETA 3 SEPTEMBER ***Sex Tape*** **is out this month.**

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Sound bites

Quotable dialogue from this month's movies – and their stars...

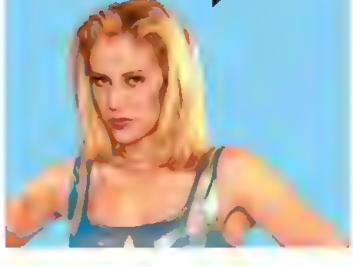
"I just don't know if it's the sort of thing that the Academy will accept."
Gary Oldman on the chance of Andy Serkis getting an Oscar nom for *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes*

"Towards the end of time on *Harry Potter*, I did start to get worried. I wasn't before but journalists started asking, 'Do you think your best years are behind you?' At 20."
Daniel Radcliffe on life after *HP*.

"I think we've got some stones left unturned and there's some latitude left for us to build on and I'd love to get back in the suit again"
Wesley Snipes on a potential *Blade 4*

"**Who has sex for three hours? That's the length of the movie *Lincoln*. You did the full *Lincoln*!**"
Robby (**Rob Corddry**) is impressed by his friends' stamina in *Sex Tape*.

"**[*Disney*] don't realise what a cult phenomenon it has become. I mean, people dress up as us for Halloween.**"
Mira Sorvino on the enduring popularity of *Romy And Michele's High School Reunion*.



"I AM GROOT"
Vin Diesel's character makes use of a limited vocab in *Guardians Of The Galaxy*.

"**I would do [*a sequel*] if it was completely turned on its head. *Con Air* in space, for example.**"
Director **Simon West** thinks big.

"**The Park is up and running, John Hammond's dream has come true... and then you will see it get torn down.**"
Chris Pratt on *Jurassic World*.

"I love *Star Wars*, and I don't want people to watch and go, 'Oh, there's Simon Pegg's face.'"
Simon Pegg on steering clear of J.J. Abrams' *Episode VII*.

"*Sin City* is like a woman or a casino: somebody's gonna win."
Johnny (**Joseph Gordon-Levitt**) in *Sin City 2*

GETTY, ALLSTAR, PHOTOSHOT

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Screen

Every new movie reviewed & rated

★★★★★ OUTSTANDING ★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ RUBBISH

'Pride is an uplifting portrait of working-class solidarity. Witty and moving.'

FILM OF THE MONTH

NEW RELEASES 29.08.14-19.09.14

OUT NOW		
Big Star: Nothing Can Hurt Me	★★★★	p51
The Expendables 3	★★★	p54
Guardians Of The Galaxy	★★★★	p49
Hercules	★★★	p55
The Inbetweeners 2	★★★★	p50
Into The Storm	★★	p46
Let's Be Cops	★★★★	p46
Lucy	★★★★	p44
Step Up: All In	★★	p55
Wolfcop	★★★	p47

29 AUGUST		
As Above, So Below	★★★	p46
If I Stay	★★	p55
The Internet's Own Boy: The Story Of Aaron Swartz	★★★	p55

3 SEPTEMBER		
Sex Tape	★★	p52

5 SEPTEMBER		
Attila Marcel	★★★★	p53
Before I Go To Sleep	★★★	p50
Finding Fela	★★★	p46
The Guest	★★★★	p51
The Hundred-Foot Journey	★★★	p52
Island Of Lemurs: Madagascar	★★★	p55
Life Of Crime	★★★	p53
M	★★★★★	p53
They Came Together	★★★	p47
Watermark	★★	p51

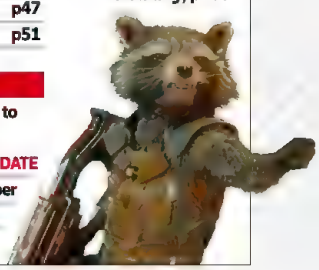
12 SEPTEMBER		
All Cheerleaders Die	★★★	p55
At Berkeley	★★	p55
Ballet Boys	★★	p51
Down By Law	★★★★	p53
In Order Of Disappearance	★★★	p52
Manuscripts Don't Burn	★★★★	p52
A Most Wanted Man	★★★★	p45
Pride	★★★★	p42
A Spell To Ward Off The Darkness	★★★	p55

19 SEPTEMBER		
20,000 Days On Earth	★★★★	p47
Grand Piano	★★★	p53
Magic In The Moonlight	★★★	p45
Night Will Fall	★★★★	p52
The Riot Club	★★★★	p47
Think Like A Man Too	★★	p46
A Walk Among The Tombstones	★★★	p47
Wish I Was Here	★★★	p51

ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to www.totalfilm.com for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
The Boxtrolls	12 September
Finding Fanny	12 September
The Wizard Of Oz 3D	12 September



Rocket ride: *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, p49.

Pride

★★★★ Out 12 Sept

Anything but the pits...

Splitting the bill was a contentious issue.

IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT the relationship between the gay community and the mining one hasn't been over-explored in popular cinema. Yet the real-life bond that formed between these two groups in the '80s is precisely what motors this crowd-pleasing Brit-flick, an uplifting portrait of working-class solidarity that explores territory previously excavated by the likes of *Brassed Off* and *Billy Elliot* while still feeling as fresh as a newly uncovered coal seam.

It's June 1984, three months into the miners' strike. In London, one enterprising gay activist (Ben Schnetzer) has a notion to raise cash for the National Union of Miners (NUM), recognising in Scargill's pit workers another oppressed minority at the sharp end of Thatcher's policies. Rebuffed by the union's leaders, the LGSM (Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners) decide to reach out to a colliery community directly. Their efforts take them to Onllwyn, a village in Wales whose prejudices throw another obstacle into the mix...

Inspired by a true story, *Pride* actually tells several. Front and centre is a tale of pronounced culture clash, the arrival of Schnetzer's Mark, his long-suffering lieutenant Mike (*This Is England*'s Joe Gilgun) and the rest of their gang prompting every reaction from uneasy acceptance to disgusted outrage. Yet Stephen Beresford's witty and moving script also makes space for a plethora of subplots that, while not always developed to their full potential, help give the film as a whole a richer, more profound resonance.

Leather girls

OK, so you might have expected to find a closeted teen (George MacKay) who takes up the banner behind his parents' backs, or a flamboyant thespian (Dominic West) who breaks down barriers by unleashing the power of disco. Less anticipated, though, are the embittered Welsh outcast (*Sherlock*'s Andrew Scott) who knows only too well what prejudice awaits his cohorts in the Valleys, or the way the escalating Aids crisis sows seeds of division within this team of bucket-rattling do-gooders. In Onllwyn, too, we get stories aplenty: the humble housewife (Jessica Gunning) who finds a vocation in the cause, or the poetry-quoting shut-in (Bill Nighy) who experiences a new lease of life.

And there is farce as well, much of it coming from a clutch of curious oldies, led by Imelda Staunton's Hefina, who take to the leather scene like the proverbial ducks to water. If there's a heart to the film, though, it's Dai (Paddy Considine), a union rep with the wit and foresight to see that a friend in need is a friend indeed. His thank you speech to a room of sceptical clubbers is an early highpoint, rivalled later by a rendition of 'Bread And Roses' – performed by one-time *The Voice* hopeful Bronwen Lewis – that is sadder than a pit pony stuck down a mineshaft.

That such emotional grace notes are sounded by a director with only one feature film credit to his name makes *Pride*'s accomplishments all the more remarkable. Yet Matthew Warchus is hardly a novice, his numerous achievements in theatre (*Art*, *Matilda The Musical*, *God Of Carnage*) more than compensating for one lacklustre

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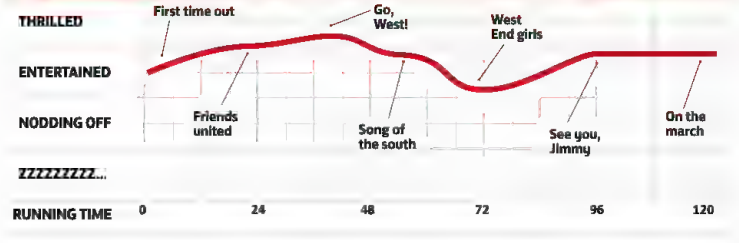

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SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

BRASSED OFF 1996
Where there's muck there's brass in Mark Herman's tale of an indefatigable colliery band.

THE FULL MONTY 1997
Jobless no-hopers find dignity in disrobing in this hit comedy about stripping steelworkers.

BILLY ELLIOT 2000
A striking miner's son has all the right moves in Stephen Daldry's toe-tapping heartwarmer.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews

'This is a film with so much generosity of spirit, which celebrates what brings us together'

venture behind the camera (*Simpatico*, his underwhelming 1999 adap of Sam Shepard's play). His second reveals him to be as adept at juggling big casts as he is at marshalling large set-pieces, be they in a working man's club in the Dulais Valley, a Bronski Beat gig in Camden or a demonstration outside the Houses of Parliament. Perhaps his most important decision here, however, is to downplay the schmaltz, his film nimbly avoiding the layers of sentimentality that could have easily coated the entire enterprise like coal dust.

Alpha males

Admittedly, Beresford's screenplay is noticeably less sure-footed when it comes to its lesbian characters, most of whom make *Viz*'s Millie Tant seem sophisticated by comparison. Indeed, there are times when the likes of Steph (Faye Marsay), Zoe (Jessie Cave) and Stella (Karina Fernandez) are simply employed as punchlines: objects of curiosity to be quizzed and probed by Menna Trussler's Gwen, an ageing busybody craving insights into the Sapphic lifestyle. ("What I was told about lesbians can't be true, can it? That you're all vegetarians?") They may have a presence but they don't have a voice, or at least one that gets heard. For all *Pride*'s preaching about equality and acceptance, it's invariably a bloke who steps up to the microphone.

Still, this is a minor cavil in a film with so much generosity of spirit, one that celebrates what brings us together rather than the stuff that pulls us apart. It's also one that could conceivably do wonders for the Welsh tourist board, so lovingly is the country photographed by DoP Tat Radcliffe. **Neil Smith**

THE VERDICT A feel-good charmer with an important message, *Pride* will have you clutching your sides, wiping your eyes and punching the air in triumph. Could this be this decade's *Full Monty*?

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Matthew Warchus **Starring** Bill Nighy, Imelda Staunton, Paddy Considine, Dominic West **Screenplay** Stephen Beresford **Distributor** Pathe **Running time** 120 mins

"What do you mean I have to wear this all film?!"

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

NIKITA 1990
After dodging death, Besson's junkie-turned-assassin learns to deal it out with style.

KILL BILL: VOL. 1 2003
"Revenge is never a straight line. It's a forest," when The Bride is slicing and dicing

LIMITLESS 2011
Bradley Cooper's not-so-smart drugs turn him into a Wall Street weasel.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews

Lucy

★★★★ Out now

She's a brainiac, braaainiac...

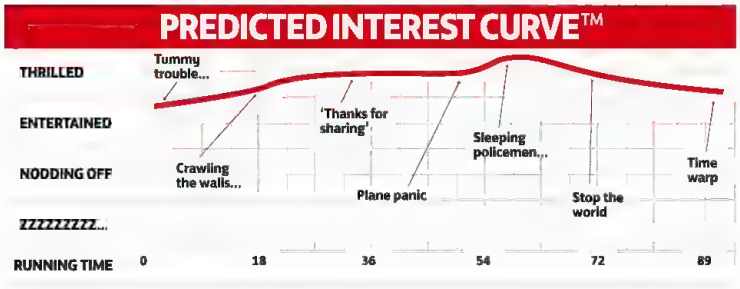
WHETHER SHE'S BEEN AN ALIEN (*Under The Skin*), superhero (*Captain America: The Winter Soldier*) or purring A.I. (*Her*), Scarlett Johansson has been anything but human recently. In Luc Besson's preposterous and enjoyable tale about an unwilling Taiwan drug mule propelled into ass-kicking, all-knowing higher consciousness by leaking super-drug CPH4, she gets to show what humans could be, if we used more than 10 per cent of our brains. Besson, back on exhilarating form, demands your attention for this combo of action, pop-science and Malick-style metaphysical musing.

Lucy's brainpower, kick-started by a beating from henchmen of Korean über-gangster Mr Jang (Choi Min-sik) lets her suck in the world's knowledge and bend it to her will. Doing some genre bending of his own, Besson shapes Lucy's vengeance trail into a sci-fi-thriller-cum-superhuman origin story. This is fusion cinema, drawing on Hollywood action, Asian gangster tropes and Euro-arthouse themes. And for seasoning, we have flashes of animal footage and *Koyaanisquatsi*-style wonderment. Yet, for the most part, the mix is kept under tight control by Besson's pacing and sheer panache.

Swatting thugs onto the ceiling like bugs, mind-reading through a maelstrom of data, Johansson makes colossal cognitive capacity look way more fun than *Limitless* or *Transcendence*'s power grabs. Showing Lucy's experience from inside and out, trees pulse, drugs napalm neural networks and phone-calls stream like rain, as Besson's images pump up the power. Tossed around like a toy by the convulsions triggered by CPH4, or disintegrating in a stream of rebellious cells, Lucy's mental upgrading has more than a hint of horror about it. Rather less riveting is Morgan Freeman's Professor Norman. Conveniently unveiling his Powerpoint of Preposterous Science about untapped brain capacity, he drops both viewers and the movie's IQ a few points.

> 'The mix is kept under control by Besson's pacing and panache'

As it barrels towards its climax, Lucy's boundless powers overshadow every other character and the action sequences develop an omnipotence problem: witness our hero effortlessly surfing a Parisian car-chase. And there's a audacious outcome that uses both velocity and grandiosity to propel it into *2001* terrain. But Johansson is magnificent. Steering Lucy from tearful victim, through calmly logical assassin to questing consciousness, she's compulsively watchable. Scar-Jo owns every inch of this wild ride, and she knows it. **Kate Stables**



THE VERDICT Besson is at his balls-out bonkers best in this genre-scrambling, mind-expanding exhilarator. Find it on the biggest screen available and just say 'Yes'...

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Luc Besson **Starring** Scarlett Johansson, Morgan Freeman, Choi Min-sik, Amr Waked **Screenplay** Luc Besson **Distributor** Universal **Running time** 89 mins

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A Most Wanted Man

★★★★ Out 12 September **Carré on abroad.**

WHEN PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN lamps a bloke then breaks into a boogie in Anton Corbijn's (*Control*) spy slow-burner, he reminds us how brilliantly he could combine size and threat with graceful subtlety. That range makes for crack casting in this adaptation of John le Carré's 2008 novel, an old-school espionage yarn freighted with post-9/11 dread, but on its own understated terms.

Hoffman shoulders the bulk of it as Günther Bachmann, the hard-drinking head of a Hamburg anti-terror unit who has to negotiate conflicting interests when Grigoriy Dobrygin's Chechen/Russian asylum seeker washes up in town. The Germans want him arrested; Robin Wright's slick CIA player wants intel; Rachel McAdams's lawyer wants to settle the man's fiscal inheritance with Willem Dafoe's oily banker.

But Bachmann has a longer game in mind: watch that tiddler in case he leads to bigger fish. Andrew Bovell's (*Lantana*) precise script plays the game with him, steering the twists to the tune of fine details. Meanwhile, Corbijn's direction shepherds the story patiently between clandestine assignations in seedy backstreets, the clammy hand of Herbert Grönemeyer's anxious score always on its neck.

If the pace sometimes sags, it's largely because Corbijn is more interested in the personal/professional lives his characters have inherited than narrative drive. But the cast nail what they do have and we're grateful for all we have left from PSH.

With controlled, restrained muscle, Hoffman suggests an entire backstory. And when he finally issues an explosion of rage, you'll spit similar profanities at the thought of what movies have lost. **Kevin Harley**

THE VERDICT **An old-school spy thriller, Corbijn's taut le Carré riff does its genre proud. Hoffman commands every second.**

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Anton Corbijn **Starring** Philip Seymour Hoffman, Willem Dafoe, Grigoriy Dobrygin, Robin Wright, Nina Hoss **Screenplay** Andrew Bovell **Distributor** Entertainment One **Running time** 122 mins

Philip Seymour Hoffman stars.

Magic In The Moonlight

★★★ Out 19 September **A midsummer night's hex comedy.**

FOR HIS 44TH FILM AS DIRECTOR, Woody Allen revisits a pet theme: a man mooning over a woman decades his junior. That man is Stanley Crawford, a London magician who performs in yellowface as 'Wei Ling-soo', a purported mystic from the Orient. Well-versed in the art of deception, he's soon whisked off to the French Riviera on a special mission: to expose a supposed American spiritualist as a charlatan.

But meeting Sophie Baker (Emma Stone), Stanley is instantly enchanted. And given that the milksop (Hamish Linklater) currently courting her leaves the tweedy conjurer looking like prime beefcake, the attraction is duly reciprocated.

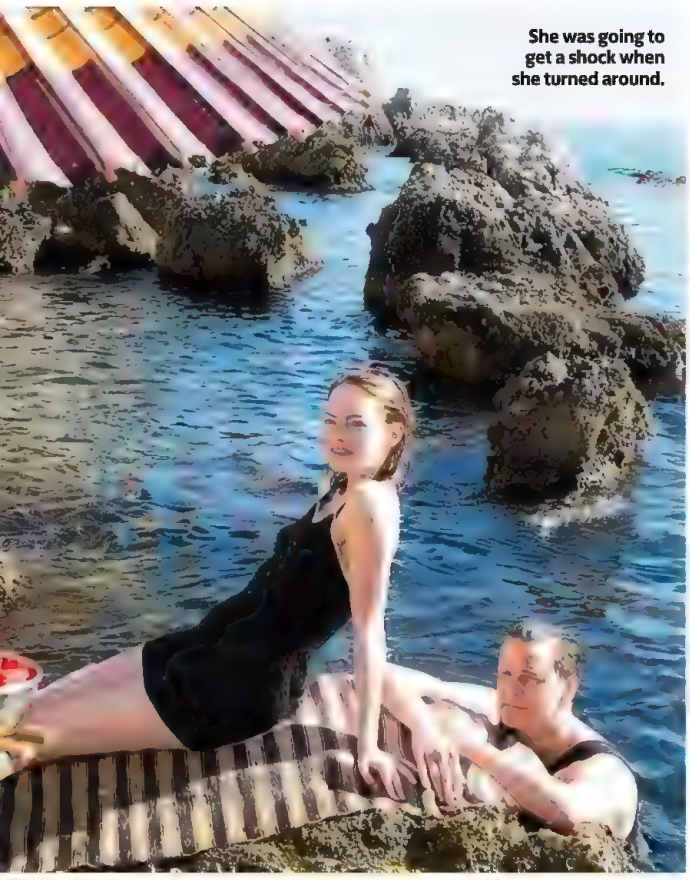
True, the ensuing flirtation does go all round the houses. Also, Stanley's idea of seduction is to conduct himself like a prat. But, despite the age gap, the romance does convince, thanks in no small part to the charming, funny Stone, who also keeps us guessing as to whether she really is clairvoyant or pulling a fast one.

Her physical radiance, meanwhile, is rivalled by Darius Khondji's glorious cinematography. For all its pleasures, this isn't A-grade Allen, coming off lightweight next to the recent double whammy of box-office smash *Midnight In Paris* and Best Actress-winner *Blue Jasmine*.

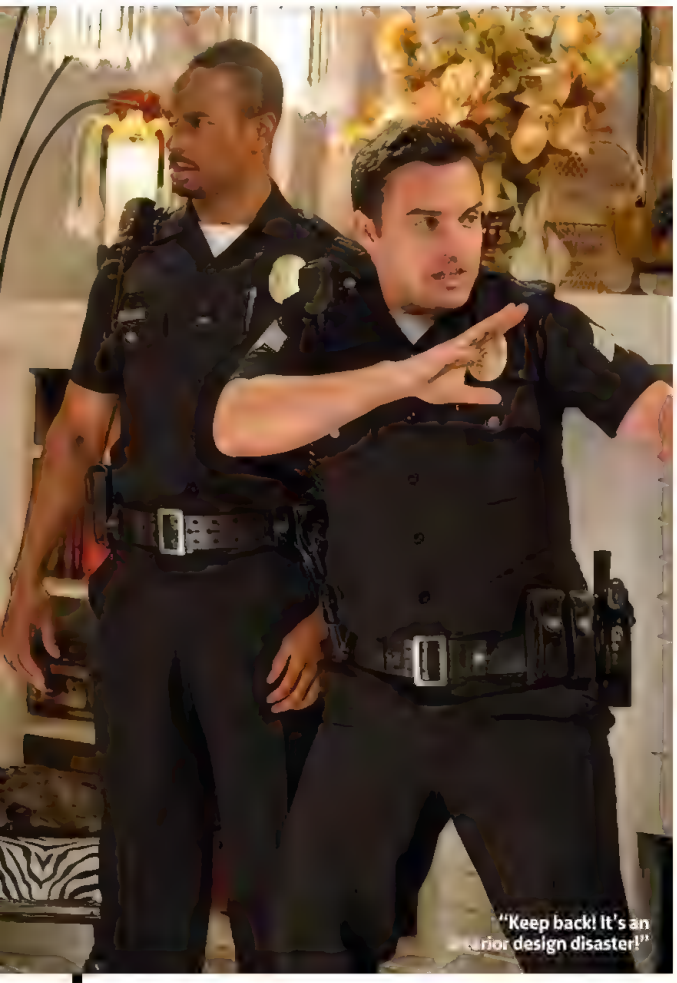
Yet it's certainly a cut above some of the Wood-man's other dalliances with illusionism like *The Curse Of The Jade Scorpion* and *Scoop*. There are scene-stealing turns from Jacki Weaver and Marcia Gay Harden, and if the script gets rickety in places, the clever climax goes some way to paying back our patience. **Rob James**

THE VERDICT **A notch below Allen's recent form but still an easy, breezy soufflé. Between the regular chuckles, Riviera scenery and the sparkling Stone, you won't feel duped.**

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Woody Allen **Starring** Colin Firth, Emma Stone, Hamish Linklater, Jacki Weaver, Marcia Gay Harden **Screenplay** Woody Allen **Distributor** Warner **Running time** 98 mins



She was going to get a shock when she turned around.


"Keep back! It's an interior design disaster!"

Let's Be Cops

★★★★ Out now **Breaking badge.**

SOMETIMES IT PAYS TO BE simple. Case in point? *Let's Be Cops*, a buddy comedy that takes one neat idea – wouldn't it be cool to act like a cop? – then knocks it out the park. Located a couple of doors down from *21 Jump Street*, Luke Greenfield's caper also recalls the infectious recklessness of *Catch Me If You Can* and *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, other films that hang on the notion of reinvention through deception. In *New Girl* actors Jake Johnson and Damon Wayans Jr., meanwhile, it boasts an instantly winning double act that, at its best, recalls the lightning-in-a-bottle chemistry of Mel Gibson and Danny Glover in the *Lethal Weapon* series.

Ohio natives in Los Angeles, Justin (Wayans) and Ryan (Johnson) have both reached 30 with sod-all to show for it. A timid games designer forever shouted down at meetings and a directionless loser living off the proceeds of a genital herpes ad, they're both in a rut and they know it. Until, that is, they attend a costume party in borrowed LAPD uniforms and find themselves noticed, respected and hit upon for perhaps the first time in their lives. ("Even the cops think we're cops!" marvels Ryan after their ruse is swallowed by the neighbourhood fuzz.)

Justin's happy for this to be a one-off. Ryan, though, can't let it go, buying an old squad car off eBay in order to continue the subterfuge. The trouble starts when he and his 'partner' fall foul of an Albanian heavy (quite the transformation for Britain's James D'Arcy) with designs on a local eatery whose pretty waitress (Nina Dobrev) Justin has fallen for. Somehow, a fake gun and a selection of police slang learned from YouTube just aren't going to cut it...

One naked perp, a hit of crystal meth and a couple of shoot-outs later, the only thing missing is a sequel. Given the limitless number of occupations our heroes could pretend to have next, it surely won't be long before that's rectified. **Neil Smith**

THE VERDICT A bolt from the blue – not least because it's from the director of *The Girl Next Door* and *Something Borrowed*...

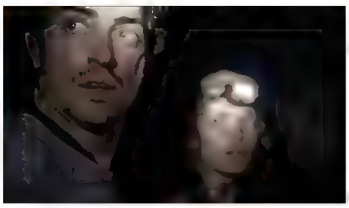
› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Luke Greenfield **Starring** Jake Johnson, Damon Wayans Jr, Nina Dobrev, James D'Arcy, **Screenplay** Luke Greenfield, Nicholas Thomas **Distributor** Fox **Running time** 104 mins

INTO THE STORM

★★☆☆☆ Out now

IN WHAT'S BASICALLY A FOUND-footage *Twister*, a storm-chasing film crew (lead by *The Walking Dead*'s Sarah Wayne Callies) crosses paths with a single father (Richard Armitage) when a record-breaking weather front hits town. While the tornado FX are often impressive, everything in between is as impactful as a light breeze. Armitage resists the urge to slip into hero mode, but his stoic good guy is surrounded by characters that are either bland, annoying or both. And the found-footage format is undone by clunkingly unnatural dialogue and internal-logic inconsistencies. **Matt Maytum**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 89 mins



AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

★★★ Out now

DIRECTOR JOHN ERICK DOWDLE'S (*Quarantine*) first-person fear ride may feature wobbly wailings and calamitous cameramen, but before you write off *As Above, So Below* as *just* another found-footage horror, it's at least trying something new. As much action adventure as horror, this tale of a female archaeologist (Perdita Weeks) who bumbles through a portal to hell in the catacombs of Paris boasts sporadically electrifying visuals but a frustratingly messy mythology. Not as scary as *The Blair Witch Project* or as claustrophobic as *The Descent*, *AASB* is an admirable Indiana Bones misfire. **Matt Risley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 93 mins

THINK LIKE A MAN TOO

★★☆☆☆ Out 19 September

IMAGINE THE HANGOVER SCRUBBED clean of any salacious bits. That's this film. As the 'Too' would imply, it's a sequel to the 2012 hit *Think Like A Man*, a manic romcom based on a self-help book aimed at women with relationship woes. In this one, the ping-ponging couples from the first film, led by motormouth Kevin Hart, descend on Vegas for the wedding of mama's boy Michael (Terrence J) and worldly-wise single mum Candace (Regina Hall). Not surprisingly, gags about gambling and strippers ensue. Also not surprisingly, the lightweight laughs dissolve into eye-rolling melodrama. **Ken McIntyre**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 106 mins

FINDING FELA!

★★★☆☆ Out 5 September

FELA KUTI WASN'T AT ALL WORRIED about contracting HIV in 1997. On the contrary, those lesions simply meant he was 'shedding his skin' like a snake, becoming ever more powerful. That mix of balls-out heroism and terrifying self-delusion typified the iconic Nigerian singer and activist, whose electrifying life and times are explored here by documentary-maker Alex Gibney. It's a decent enough beginner's guide, though never quite gets a grip on its complex subject. Check out 1982 Fela doc *Music Is The Weapon* – or consider it a stopgap until the biopic emerges from development hell. **Ali Catterall**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 119 mins

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THE RIOT CLUB

★★★★ Out 19 September

AN EDUCATION IS THE LAST THING ON the minds of the entitled toffs in Lone Scherfig's latest, Oxford students whose membership of the titular fraternity demands they treat "debauchery as an art form". That's bad news for the country hostelry that rents them its dining room, though not for fans of dishy Brits in tails (Max Irons, Douglas Booth) and punters keen to have their prejudices about aristos confirmed. Adapting her own savagely funny play *Posh*, Laura Wade betters it by adding an additional female presence (Holliday Grainger) who sees these Bullingdon bullies at their worst. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 106 mins

WOLFCOP

★★★ Out now

LOWELL DEAN'S FUN, FONDLY MADE creature feature has more going for it than its awesome title: a *WolfCop* rap, for starters. Yes, it's *Teen Wolf* for the DV horror generation, but there are decent performances from loser policeman-turned-lycanthrope Leo Fafard and co, and some fun, *Simpsons*-y asides. "Remember what happened to the boy who cried wolf?" he warns a chum. "Nothing happened to him!" comes the (correct) response. Anyone expecting *The Howling* or *An American Werewolf In London* will be disappointed, but stick it on afterwards and you'll definitely stay awake till the end. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 79 mins (tbc)

20,000 DAYS ON EARTH

★★★★ Out 19 September

A ROCK ONE-OFF GETS SUITABLY singular treatment in Brit artists Iain Forsyth and Jane Pollard's rich, wry, sumptuously styled study of Nick Cave. We see Cave recording, in therapy, joshing with bandmate Warren Ellis, giving Kylie Minogue a lift... Most rock-docs would present this material as "the real Cave", but Forsyth/Pollard diss genre clichés and adopt a semi-staged 'day in the life' pitch to show how Cave truly is larger than life. Cave's wittily hard-boiled voiceover and on-stage potency complete the picture: a properly artful portrait of an artist in total command of his myth. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 97 mins

A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES

★★★ Out 19 September

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION FOR its star, Scott Frank's thriller (based on Lawrence Block's Matthew Scudder books) spends more time showing Liam Neeson's world-weary PI finding people than killing them, though there's plenty of that too. Scudder's hunt for a man's (Dan Stevens) kidnapped wife makes a compellingly nasty case; his burgeoning friendship with a streetwise teen a little less so. Exciting, in places, though a stranger to subtlety, it ticks all the genre boxes, but there's something about its knowing noirisms that feels superficial rather than soaked-in. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** TBC mins

The final heat of the patronising look competition.

They Came Together

★★★ Out 5 September

As spoof as it gets.

THE SMARTEST SPOOFS secretly love the genre they're slapping about for laughs. Under the relentless rain of gags unleashed in David Wain's mirthful but merciless satire of New York romcoms, lies a nugget of affection making it as acute as his cult teen-tease *Wet Hot American Summer* (2001). But he and co-writer Michael Showalter don't spare lovebirds Molly and Joel (Amy Poehler and Paul Rudd, both exuding weapons-grade affability). As her indie sweetshop is menaced by his candy corporation's megastore and his sexy ex (a smouldering Cobie Smulders) rocks their romance, the path of true love is strewn with meet-cutes, klutzy sex, and no-hope nuptials. We're parked firmly in Ephron-town, with a view of Woody-world. Take a drink every time you spot a pitch-perfect steal from *Manhattan*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Sleepless In Seattle* or *You've Got Mail* and you'll be legless before the first kiss.

Wain's world is an unrepentantly wacky one, with an *Airplane!*-style fizzy mix of verbal, visual and raunch gags shaking up the sharp-eyed spoofing. His absurdist streak pushes things way beyond *Scary Movie* yucks, as when Joel and a barman enter into an exchange of "You can say that again!" and 'Tell me about it' that threatens to become endless. But the downside to the film's pacey gag race is that sketch-comedy shtick overwhelms the plot periodically – a more solid story would have helped when things get Plotless In Manhattan. Wain's great eye for details (right down to cheesy romcom edits, music and décor) sadly doesn't extend to the visuals, with the film sporting an over-lit TV-movie look.

What keeps things bubbling are Rudd and Poehler's superb central performances, which exploit their existing screen personas (boyish vs a-dork-able) and their fine comic chemistry together. Rudd, who plays it straighter than a ruler, uses that good-guy grin to make the film's mood hilariously sweet, rather than snarky. **Kate Stables**

THE VERDICT Adorable, acidly funny and absurd in equal measures, this bouncy, gag-packed romcom spoof ain't quite as funny as it thinks. But when Paul meets Amy, they'll have you at 'Hello'...

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** David Wain **Starring** Paul Rudd, Amy Poehler, Ed Helms, Cobie Smulders **Screenplay** Michael Showalter, David Wain **Distributor** Lionsgate **Running time** 83 mins

Guardians Of The Galaxy

★★★★ Out now

(Team of) A-holes assemble!

WHEN IT COMES TO TAKING risks, there's arguably no ballsier studio than Marvel working in Hollywood today. Yet while recovering addicts, Shakespearean directors and super-powered Norse gods are all pretty sizeable blockbuster bets, their latest movie adventure makes those audacious gambles look positively sensible.

So what do you get when you mix a gun-toting raccoon, an alien tree warrior, a WWE wrestler, a 'chubby comic relief' sitcom star and a super-team obscure enough to give even the nerdiest of comic-book fans pause for thought? As if that wasn't perplexing enough, what happens when you then lay that surreal concoction in the creative hands of the man who wrote *Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed*? Bafflingly, the answer is a weird, wonderful and wildly surprising sci-fi that, if not the year's best blockbuster, could at least end up being 2014's most fun.

While heralded as part of Marvel's Cinematic Universe (and the penultimate movie in the studio's Phase 2 schedule), *GOTG* is far from beholden to the ever-intermingling movies that came before it. After a short Earthbound prelude focusing on protagonist Peter Quill's childhood tragedy, a subsequent alien abduction and time-jump 26 years in the future soon flings audiences to the farthest flung corners of the galaxy, and a world away from Super Soldiers or government agencies.

Orb or nothing

A now adult Peter Quill (Chris Pratt) goes by the name Star-Lord, and spends his days looting, thieving and rapscallion-ing his way around the galaxy. When a seemingly standard scavenge for a mysterious orb goes awry, he soon finds himself with a bizarre array of badasses on his tail. Not only is the orb housing a treasure of world-destroying power, but it's a heist that's placed Star-Lord as public enemy number one on the list of one of space's biggest of Bads, the nefarious Ronan the Accuser (Lee Pace), who sends right-hand assassin Gamora (Zoe Saldana) to track Quill down.

Super-powered scuffles inevitably ensue, and it's not long before Quill finds himself incarcerated in a high-security prison, and

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They were too scared to join the fancy dress party.

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a host of uneasy alliances alongside Gamora, an alien tree called Groot (voiced by Vin Diesel), a sarcastic hyper-aggressive raccoon called Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper), and a vengeful maniac named Drax (Dave Bautista) whose mission is to avenge his murdered family.

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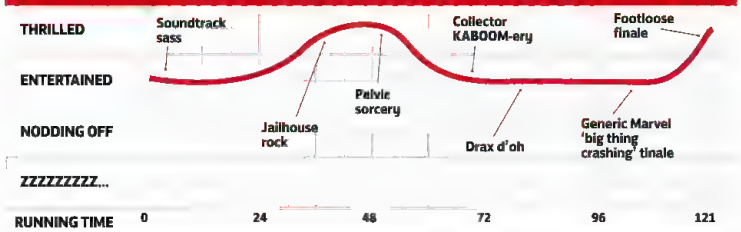

While *Avengers Assemble* had the tricky task of weaving together four separate franchises into one coherent über-team, at least audiences had been exposed to 600 minutes of set-up. James Gunn, who wrote and directed *GOTG*, was lumped with the unenviable challenge of assembling his gang of lovingly nicknamed 'A-holes' whilst simultaneously furnishing them with depth enough to root for. A series of succinct albeit skimmed-over personal tragedies soon paint the Guardians as an eminently damaged team, and one worth cheering for as much individually as collectively.

Chris Pratt signals his ascension to the leading man big leagues with a performance as comedic as it is charismatic, while Zoe Saldana's predictably solid as the team's femme fatale, but it's others who charm. Bradley Cooper steals the show as Rocket, delivering enough cynicism, emotional complexity and comic-book cool to make a talking raccoon far more than the one note visual gag it could have been. Meanwhile, Dave Bautista surpasses his WWE and direct-to-video background with a performance as concerned with fragility as finger-breaking, and Vin Diesel's nuanced readings of the same three words over and again ("I AM GROOT") prove it was far from a simple stunt casting.

> 'It has a tone that pinballs wildly between heartfelt emotion and utterly mad sci-fi weirdness'

Element of surprise

It's a tone that pinballs wildly between heartfelt emotion and utterly mad sci-fi weirdness, and one near as perfectly straddled by Gunn, whose creative fingerprints mark *GOTG* as a blockbuster that's always keen to surprise. The soundtrack is as brilliant as it is eclectic, the design and cinematography as dirty as it is pretty, while the through-current of subversive humour undercuts expectations, and propels the plot through its sporadic pacing problems.

Admittedly, with so many brand new characters, and an expansive cosmos to establish, there are a few things that get lost in the madcap mix. Some motivations are never truly explained (Ronan the Accuser's mission statement is pretty much 'Hit things with hammer, take over the world'), some characters are underserved (more of Karen Gillan's sassy and psychotic Nebula, please), and some of the action feels rushed, but these are all things that can be tackled in the inevitable and probably hugely anticipated sequel.

As indebted to *Serenity* as it is to *Star Wars* and *Avengers Assemble*, *GOTG* reboots the space opera in the most surprising, entertaining and emotionally satisfying of ways. It's your move, *Episode VII*.

Matt Risley

THE VERDICT Mad, marvellous and all kinds of sci-fi magical, *Guardians Of The Galaxy* is Marvel's riskiest but most surprising success yet.

› **Certificate** 12A **Director** James Gunn **Starring** Chris Pratt, Zoe Saldana, Dave Bautista, Vin Diesel, Bradley Cooper **Screenplay** James Gunn, Nicole Perlman **Distributor** Disney **Running time** 121 mins

The guys fell asleep on the Tube for longer than they remembered

The Inbetweeners 2

★★★★ Out now **Rhymes with 'there will be poo'.**

MUFF BEFORE MATES IS ACTUALLY a crime in Australia," says loveable lunk Neil (Blake Harrison) and he's right. From the TV series to the 2012 hit spin-off film, *The Inbetweeners* has always been about the ups and downs of male friendship; and never more so than in this sequel when the boys wind up in Australia, where fantasist Jay (James Buckley) claims he's working the decks in a Sydney club under the name "DJ Big Penis".

Back home, Simon (Joe Thomas) is still dating holiday romance Lucy (Tamla Kari), now the girlfriend from hell – microwaving his PlayStation and cutting up his hoodies. Resident narrator Will (Simon Bird) is seemingly the most unpopular student at Bristol Uni while Neil has just found this great new app called Grindr...

Deciding to surprise Jay in Australia, the boys reunite and head to stoner paradise Byron Bay, after Will bumps into prep school friend Katie (Emily Berrington), his first love ("that is well Jimmy Saville," says Neil). Sadly, he has a rival to contend with: Ben (Freddie Stroma), a guitar-strumming trust-fund git with dreadlocks.

The plot is solid enough, but really it's the gags that count. Is there anything to rival the dance sequence in the first film? Actually, yes: for one, the scene at a water park; for two, Neil feeding the dolphins; and for three, Simon's desert drink... a trio of gut-busters in a film that, refreshingly, saves all its big laughs for the second half.

Yet amid the riffs about Will's mum's tits and Neil's gay dad, creators Iain Morris and Damon Beesley (who also direct) haven't forgotten the bromance that always made the show so watchable. Puerile, pleasurable and perfectly executed. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT Rude, crude and packed with more laughs than Jay's had lovers (6,004, apparently), *Inbetweeners* fans will lap this up. All this, and a killer twist.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Damon Beesley, Iain Morris **Starring** James Buckley, Simon Bird, Joe Thomas, Blake Harrison, **Screenplay** Damon Beesley, Iain Morris **Distributor** Entertainment **Running time** 96 mins

Before I Go To Sleep

★★★ Out 5 September **Haven't we been here before?**

BASED ON THE 2011 BESTSELLING book by former clinical scientist S.J. Watson, Rowan Joffe's sophomore movie is every bit as polished-looking as his directorial debut, *Brighton Rock*, its action lent a sci-fi sheen by antiseptic interiors that gleam like honey. As with *Memento* or, played a different way, *50 First Dates*, its plot is driven by a protagonist suffering from anterograde amnesia, meaning each day she awakens with her memory wiped clean. It's a neat enough gimmick that affords the opportunity for suspense, scares and more twists than you can shake a corkscrew at, but the action will evaporate from viewers' minds within 24 hours.

Christine (Nicole Kidman) arises each day to learn that she was involved in an accident, while Ben (Colin Firth), her husband, sets about earning her trust and aiding the effort to reassemble her life. But there's a catch: each morning she receives a call from psychotherapist Dr. Nash (Mark Strong) informing her of the video diary she's keeping hidden, and contrary versions of her past start to emerge. Was she really in an accident or was it something more sinister? Who is her best friend Claire (Anne-Marie Duff)? And can Ben – or, for that matter, Dr. Nash – be trusted?

Shot by *Kick-Ass* DoP Ben Davis, *Before I Go To Sleep* features solid performances from its A-listers and packages heavyweight themes within propulsive genre trappings. But Joffe's tidy script and slick direction never quite capture the ragged emotional heft required to make us truly care about the outcome, and the persistent memory that we've been here before, done better, puts a blot on proceedings. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT A handsome thriller, absorbing for its duration and with a couple of neat rug-pulls. But expect a strong sense of déjà vu – you'd be better off reliving *Memento*.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Roland Joffe **Starring** Nicole Kidman, Colin Firth, Mark Strong, Anne-Marie Duff **Screenplay** Roland Joffe **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running time** 92 mins

She didn't find the *Grace Of Monaco* reviews funny.

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She's still only getting one tip.

The Guest

★★★★ Out 5 September **Downtown crabby.**

RARE IS THE THRILLER THAT converts *Downton Abbey* fans to the dark side. But this could do the trick. Starring Dan Stevens – aka *Abbey*'s Matthew Crawley – it's another playful '80s-infused crowdpleaser from Adam Wingard and Simon Barrett (*V/H/S*, *You're Next*), who more than know their way around the video shop. We begin with army boots pounding the desert floor, before a lurid title card arrives with a speaker-shuddering chord. It's *Dead Man's Shoes* to Dario Argento in one cut, although *A History Of Violence* via *Roadhouse* gives a better idea of the mood.

The boots belong to David (Stevens), who arrives at the Peterson family's door with a message from their late son who died on duty in Afghanistan. Mourning mum (Sheila Kelly) invites this nice young man to stay, doubting dad (Leland Orser) is not so sure; daughter (Maika Monroe) dismissive, son (Brendan Meyer) smitten. Soon, David's inveigled himself into family life, instantly becoming the coolest thing in Dipshitville. Could he be too good to be true?

Well, yes, but there's an indecent amount to enjoy here: sensitive central performances, cameos from Wingard buddies Joel David Moore, Ethan Embry and A.J. Bowen, whetstone-sharp dialogue, some big laughs and a synth score that pumps like blood in the ears. Especially cherishable are the scenes where dreamy David suddenly shows his mettle, snapping bones and smashing faces to protect his new family, despite their protestations. The tension between them needing him and fearing him makes up the best part of the film. Like David, the third act badly outstays its welcome, but even this cruises merrily by, thanks to his cringey charms. The stuff that Diet Coke breaks are made of, the film all but swoons every time he flexes a muscle – let alone steps out of the shower. Even if it doesn't launch Stevens' career Stateside, it'll keep his existing fans more than *Abbey*. **Matt Glasby**

THE VERDICT Cool as you like one second, camp as Christmas the next, this entertainingly overpumped action-horror will have genre fans (and their mums) grinning from ear to ear.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Adam Wingard **Starring** Dan Stevens, Maika Monroe, Brendan Meyer, Sheila Kelley, Leland Orser **Screenplay** Simon Barrett **Distributor** Icon **Running time** 100 mins

BIG STAR: NOTHING CAN HURT ME

★★★★ Out now

"THE LITTLE BAND WHO COULDN'T" IS the affectingly bittersweet hook for Drew DeNicola's loving doc about the almost-rise, demise and rediscovery of early '70s US alt-pop beauties Big Star. Critics, musos and family members pop up to revere a band who spun melancholy into magic over three albums, before bad distribution, bad luck and tragedy broke the spell. The downside of their cult stature is a shortfall of footage, but the music is uncannily gorgeous, well deployed and copious: for non-initiates, it'll be like finding lost treasure. **Kevin Harley**

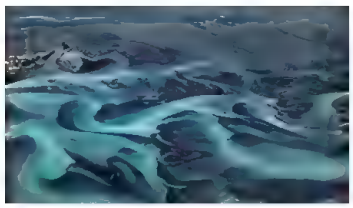
› **Certificate** N/A **Running time** 112 mins

BALLET BOYS

★★☆☆☆ Out 12 September

WHEN A BALLET TEACHER PUSHES her students for more "Attack!" in Kenneth Elvebakk's frustrating documentary about teenage boys yearning for a life in ballet, you know how she feels. Elvebakk follows three Oslo boys as they try to locate their centre of balance. The lads are affable and talented but Elvebakk fails to find his film's centre: emotion and thrust are largely lacking. One boy leaves, then he comes back... and so it continues until a final parting occurs with an indifferent shrug. As a window on a world, *Ballet Boys* is solid. As dramatic exploration, it lacks attack. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 72 mins



WATERMARK

★★★☆☆ Out 5 September

"HOW DOES WATER SHAPE US, HOW do we shape water?" asks photographer Edward Burtynsky who, along with filmmaker Jennifer Baichwal, seeks to explore just that in this Canadian documentary. Much like the pair's 2006 collaboration *Manufactured Landscapes*, their study of water – scientists drilling ice in Greenland, millions washing away sins in India, China's staggering Xiaolangdi Dam – is visually led. However, with no narration or context, its subject matter comes across as dry, while the enviro-message is undermined by a yawn-inducing lack of urgency. **Stephen Kelly**

› **Certificate** U **Running time** 91 mins

WISH I WAS HERE

★★★☆☆ Out 19 September

TEN YEARS AFTER GARDEN STATE, Zach Braff delivers his second film as writer/director/star. He plays Aidan, an aspiring actor sent into a tailspin when his father (Mandy Patinkin) contracts cancer. Lacking – perhaps deliberately – its predecessor's hipster edge, *WIWH* functions as a grown-up weepie, following Aidan on a journey of enlightenment. Penned by Braff and brother Adam, there's an unevenness to the script – one subplot seems to exist solely to give Kate Hudson (Aidan's wife) something to do – but there are genuinely touching moments amid the slush. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 107 mins

That was the last time they used the outside toilet.

Sex Tape

★★ Out 3 September

Candid Cameron...

THE PROBLEMS START AT THE title. *Sex Tape*. For one thing, there is no 'tape'. It's a sex mp4 if anything. For another, from the iPad-centric plot to all the yammering about 'the Cloud', Jake Kasdan's (*Bad Teacher*) film strains after a relevance that only makes it look instantly dated. In five years it will all seem like complete gibberish. But that doesn't stop it hammering home product placement – in this case Apple – with a relentlessness to rival last year's Google-tastic *The Internship*. And it's just as funny as that seat-emptier.

Cameron Diaz and Jason Segel play Annie and Jay, a successful suburban couple with kids who have lost their passion in the bedroom after 10 years of social-climbing and child-rearing. To spice things back up, they decide to burn through their copy of *The Joy Of Sex*, one position at a time, in a marathon three-hour session. Naturally they film it, and naturally it leaks to all the synced iPads Jay gives away to friends, relatives, the mailman and even Annie's potential new boss (Rob Lowe). That's right, the filmmakers (including Segel, who co-wrote the screenplay) would like you to accept the concept that some guy is giving away all his old iPads to everybody he knows, and that he can afford to do so because his wife is raking in the cash as a "mommy-blogger".

If you're still willing to hang with that, what follows is a fairly fast-paced night of tablet retrieval, with the embarrassed couple capering around town getting into increasingly sitcom-y situations. Segel and Diaz are fine, cute and up for it, but they are let down by a cynical script more interested in selling hardware than entertaining the audience. And for a film about amateur porn, it's alarmingly chaste. However, there is an amazing scene where Rob Lowe and Cameron Diaz snort coke and listen to Slayer. It's the best scene in the movie. They should have just made it about that. **Ken McIntyre**

THE VERDICT If you're up for an undercooked high concept and PG-rated bedroom antics, *Sex Tape* is your movie. Diaz and Segel can do little with a flaccid script. Real porn is funnier.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Jake Kasdan **Starring** Cameron Diaz, Jason Segel, Rob Corddry, Ellie Kemper, Rob Lowe **Screenplay** Kate Angelo, Jason Segel, Nicholas Stoller **Distributor** Sony **Running time** 94 mins

IN ORDER OF DISAPPEARANCE

★★★ Out 12 September

WHEN HIS SON IS MURDERED BY DRUG smugglers, Stellan Skarsgård's snowplower pulls a Charlie Bronson on the Oslo underworld. Hans Petter Moland's slapstick Nordic noir is pitched between *The Counsellor*'s straight-faced fatalism and the tongue-in-cheek torture porn of *Big Bad Wolves*, with all the tonal issues that implies. After bothering to imbue its characters with human quirks (baddie Pal Sverre Hagen might be cinema's angriest vegan), it massacres them without mercy. It's not without its moments, but more comic dexterity and less brute force would have made a less choppy watch. **Matt Glasby**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 117 mins

MANUSCRIPTS DON'T BURN

★★★★ Out 12 September

DIRECTOR MOHAMMAD RASOULOF has suffered plenty of censorship under Iran's authorities, so his daring political thriller – shot secretly by an uncredited cast and crew – comes with added authenticity. The chilly, claustrophobic story revolves around a cash-strapped assassin involved in disbanding a group of writers before they publish an explosive memoir. The initially cryptic plotting and low-key realism are familiar from Iranian dramas; what's striking is how Rasoulof shifts into such a lucid, gut-punching tale of persecution. The film's flaws are forgivable; its very existence should be applauded. **Simon Kinnear**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 127 mins

THE HUNDRED-FOOT JOURNEY

★★★ Out 12 September

HAVING ALREADY TEMPTED US WITH the joys of the cocoa bean in *Chocolat*, Lasse Hallström returns with another blend of soapy melodrama and culinary comedy. It's eateries at war in France, as the Kadam family (led by Om Puri's proud Papa) ruffle the feathers of Helen Mirren's restaurateur when they open a curry house opposite her Michelin-starred establishment. Tensions romantic and racial simmer away, and Puri and Mirren make good sparring partners. But the film lacks real drama, and a third act; structurally, it's about as sturdy as a poppadom. **James Mottram**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 122 mins

NIGHT WILL FALL

★★★★ Out 19 September

THIS IS A FILM ABOUT A FILM; ONE that proved so hot to handle during the Cold War that it was banished to the archives of the Imperial War Museum, where it has lain unfinished for 70 years. The footage – discoveries made by the Allies in the liberated Nazi camps during 1945 – is graphic, terrible, unforgettable. And though you will have seen some of these images before (the bodies; the ovens; the pits), you will not have seen them to such a degree. This shocking if fascinating documentary (both Alfred Hitchcock and Billy Wilder have parts to play) explores why. **Ali Catterall**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 75 mins

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M

★★★★★ Out 5 September

MADE IN 1931, FRITZ LANG'S FIRST sound film was entitled *Murderers Among Us*. The Nazis furiously objected, thinking themselves targeted, but calmed down on learning it was about a deranged child-killer. Still, it's subversive enough and Lang's use of subjective sound is unsettling. As the killer, Peter Lorre is a pudgy, pop-eyed figure, at once repellent and pitiable, in the grip of a compulsion he can't control. He's hunted down by the underworld, not because they're repelled by what he does – but because it's bad for business. Extraordinary and shocking – still. **Philip Kemp**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 111 mins

DOWN BY LAW

★★★★★ Out 12 September

JIM JARMUSCH'S 1986 FOLLOW-UP TO his breakthrough film, *Stranger Than Paradise*, is a stylish black-and-white prison romp with a sense of humour as offbeat as its perfectly cast stars (John Lurie, Roberto Benigni and singer Tom Waits). Set, beautifully, in Louisiana, it sees a small-time pimp (Lurie) and a wastrel DJ (Waits) framed and locked in the clink with an irrepressible Italian tourist (guess who?). Mutual irritation merges into grudging friendship, and the wit manages to be both broad and smart, soulful and silly, subtle and raucous, all at the same time. **Emma Johnston**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 102 mins

LIFE OF CRIME

★★★ Out 5 September

BASED ON ELMORE LEONARD NOVEL *The Switch*, this crime caper's been so long in development it now acts as a prequel to 1997's *Jackie Brown*. Jennifer Aniston brings poignancy to her role as a kidnapped wife whose husband (Tim Robbins) isn't too fussed about her freedom. John Hawkes lends a crumpled dignity to the noblest of her three abductors – though everyone's thunder is stolen by *Sons Of Anarchy*'s Mark Boone Jr. The twists lean towards the glib, but any time in Leonard's world is rarely time wasted – especially now he's no longer around to share it with us. **Neil Smith**

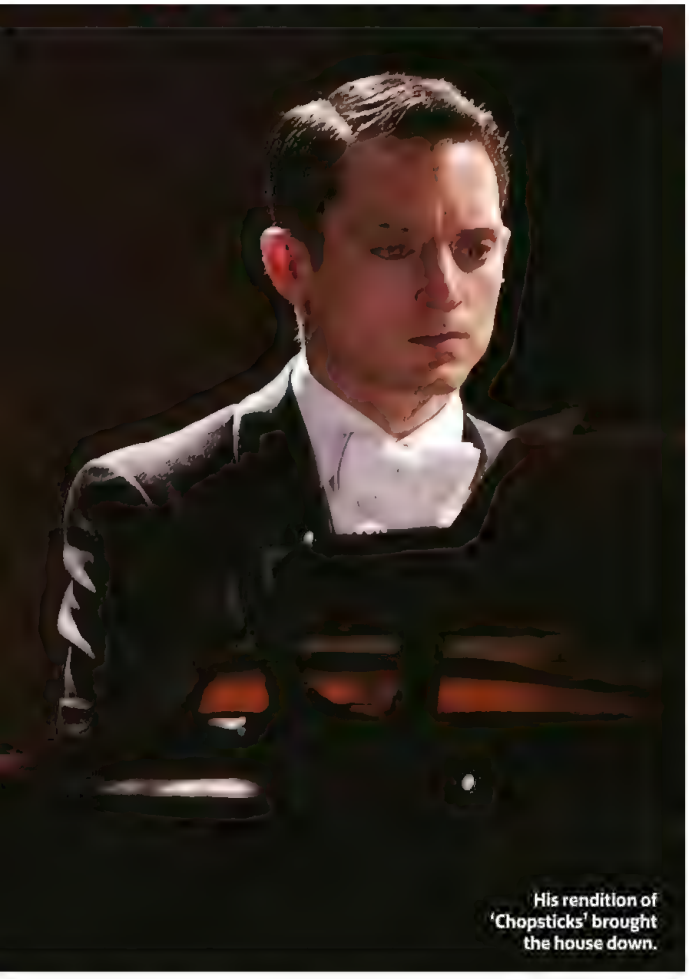
› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 94 mins

ATTILA MARCEL

★★★★ Out 5 September

THE IMAGINATIVE WHIMSY OF *Belleville Rendez-Vous* and *The Illusionist* is both present and correct in Sylvain Chomet's live-action debut, a gentle charmer with dark elements in which music plays a pivotal role. So does the mutely expressive Guillaume Gouix, on double duty as both the silent piano prodigy trying to unlock repressed memories and the wrestler father he suspects had a hand in his mother's death. Tuneful flashbacks supply fantastical punctuation to a film that sees Chomet pay elaborate homage to everyone from Jacques Demy to Marcel Proust. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 106 mins



His rendition of 'Chopsticks' brought the house down.

Grand Piano

★★★ Out 19 September

Chord in a trap...

WHATEVER YOU THINK OF Eugenio Mira's thriller, it has a pretty solid pitch: *Phone Booth*, with a piano. Joel Schumacher's high-concept effort saw Colin Farrell trapped in a public booth, with a sniper torturing him from afar. This time, it's Elijah Wood in the hot seat as concert pianist Tom Selznick, who returns to the limelight some five years after he cracked on stage whilst trying to play the notoriously difficult piece 'La Cinquette'.

Playing in Chicago, Tom's comeback performance is soon looking like it might be his last, when his sheet music is scrawled with the menacing letters: "Play one wrong note and you die." Somewhere in the theatre is Tom's tormentor, training his rifle right at the stage. After a swift departure to his dressing room, Tom gets a text, telling him to look in his backpack. Inside is an earpiece, allowing his assailant (voiced by John Cusack) to whisper instructions.

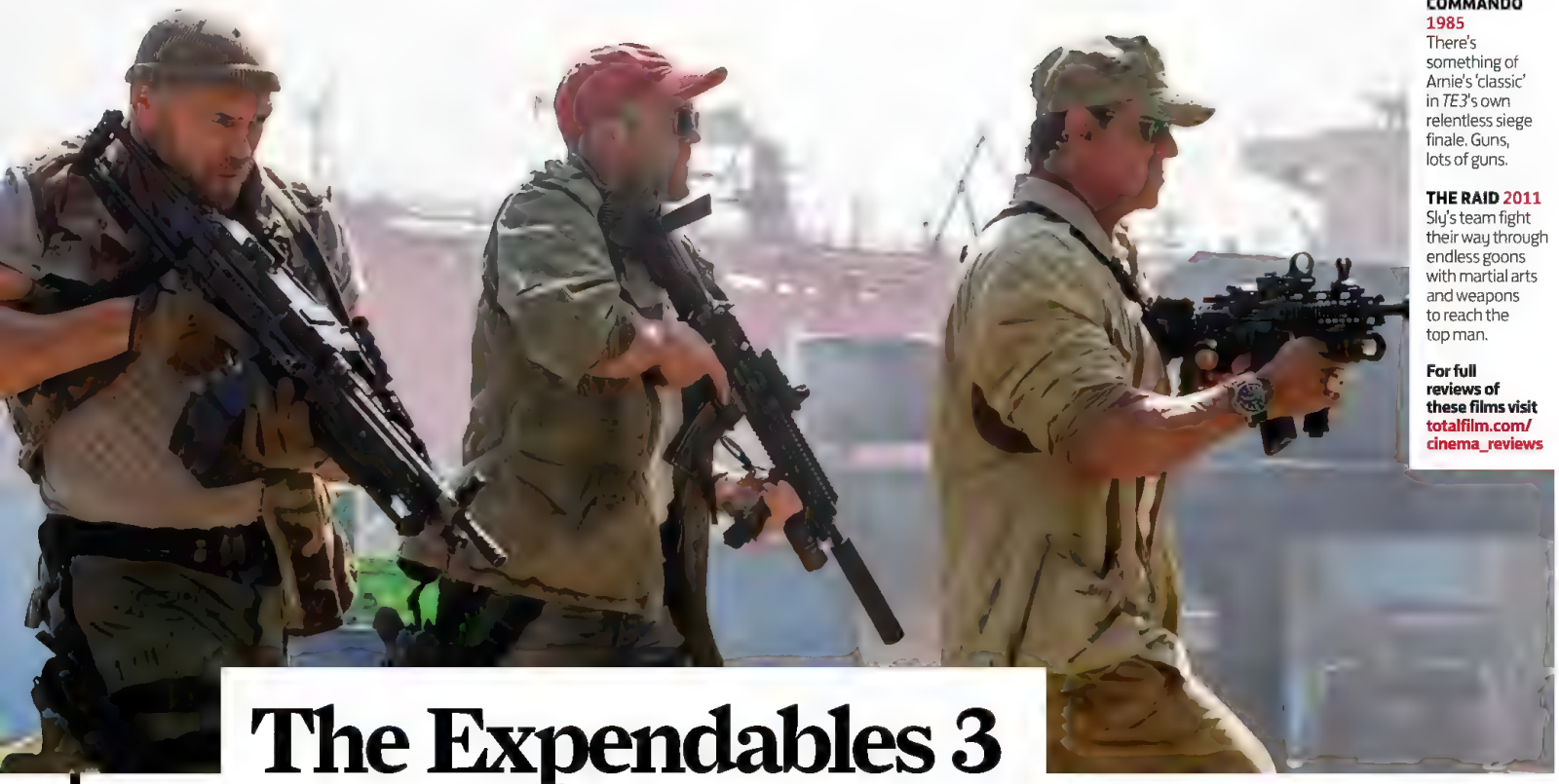
Written by Damien Chazelle (who has since gone on to write/direct Sundance winner *Whiplash*), *Grand Piano* gets more ludicrous with every tick of its metronome. Never mind that Tom leaves the stage on numerous occasions. Or that, at one point, he texts on his phone one-handed for help while still tinkling those ivories. Or that Cusack's killer has spent three years engineering this diabolical scheme in the most ludicrously complicated way possible. Still, all this could be forgiven if it weren't for the disappointingly mundane reason behind it all.

Really, *Grand Piano* is a one-act idea stretched, barely, across three. But at least it's attacked with zest by Spanish director Mira, who serves up some impressive visual flourishes – notably an overhead camera shot near the end. Wood, too, is thoroughly convincing, as he hammers at those keys. Cusack, largely off-screen, is effective, and there's a welcome appearance by *Bill & Ted* star Alex Winter as his assistant. A pity they're all made to hit duff notes. **James Mottram**

THE VERDICT More concept that complete movie, despite serious style from the director and the cast's considerable conviction. Sadly, there's no masking the plot's piano-sized holes.

› **Certificate** 15 **Director** Eugenio Mira **Starring** Elijah Wood, John Cusack, Tamsin Egerton, Kerry Bishé, Alex Winter **Screenplay** Damien Chazelle **Distributor** Icon **Running time** 90 mins

The gun dance routine was taking shape.



SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

MAD MAX 2 1981
The Expendables 3 doesn't touch it but is similarly pedal-to-metal, with practical stunts. And Gibbo!

COMMANDO 1985
There's something of Arnie's 'classic' in *TE3*'s own relentless siege finale. Guns, lots of guns.

THE RAID 2011
Sly's team fight their way through endless goons with martial arts and weapons to reach the top man.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews

The Expendables 3

★★★ Out now

The least expendable Expendables so far...

BACK IN 1985, MUCH FUSS WAS made over *Rambo: First Blood Part II*'s kill count of 69. *Rambo III* (1988) upped the ante to 132, *Rambo* (2008) clocked 236. Add those three figures and you might get close to the number of body bags ordered up by Sylvester Stallone and his team of muscles-on-wrinkles lunkheads in *The Expendables 3*. The 12A certificate is explained by a curious absence of blood: 'frequent moderate violence' is how the BBFC describes the ceaseless carnage.

Kicking off with the rescue of ex-Expendable Doctor Death (Wesley Snipes) after eight years spent in Russian clutches with access to neither scissors or razor, this third installment of Stallone's geri-action franchise serves up an armoured prison train, choppers, planes, boats, tankers, trucks, jeeps, missiles, guns and knives to make *Crocodile Dundee* wee himself. Everything explodes, Caesar (Terry Crews) winds up in critical care and the mission's target, arms dealer Conrad Stonebanks (Mel Gibson), flees unscathed.

Retiring his team for their own protection, Barney (Stallone) then zips across America and Mexico to gather a younger, even dumber team (Ronda Rousey, Kellan Lutz, Victor Ortiz, Glen Powell) with the help of Kelsey Grammar's Bonaparte. Also signing on is Antonio Banderas' eccentric Galgo, his verbal diarrhoea driving everyone mad – most of all viewers. New guys and gal in place, a 36-hour window opens up to take down Stonebanks in Bucharest...

> 'There are slick set-pieces, zingers and scathing self-mockery'

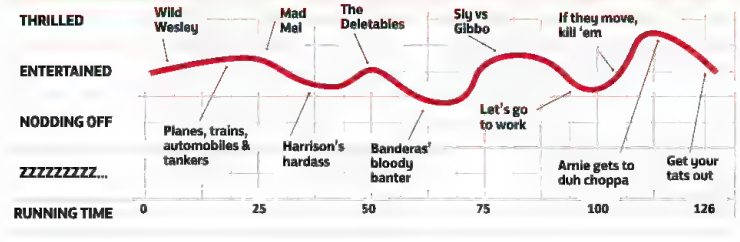
While the new team members fail to make much of an impression and Snipes is quickly forgotten, *TE3* marks an improvement on the first two outings. Director Patrick Hughes (who made polished action-western *Red Hill*) brings slicker set-pieces, the zingers are zing-ier and the self-mockery scathes, with digs made at Snipes' tax evasion, Stallone's stroke and, most dangerous of all, Jason Statham's accent. And if the cast is now too big to handle (the old team inevitably get back in on the action, allowing for much dick-waving) then Schwarzenegger at least has fun popping up to fire big guns, chomp bigger cigars and bark "Get to da choppa!"

Harrison Ford's operations officer Max Drummer, meanwhile, is a good deal more engaged, in every way, than Bruce Willis' Church.

And what of Mad Mel? Well, he steals the show. If you locked Max, Riggs and the hand puppet from *The Beaver* in a cell for 24 hours, only Stonebanks would walk out. Whether Gibson can ever again play a hero is debatable, but everyone can agree he's a great villain. **Jamie Graham**

THE VERDICT More sure-footed than the first two, and more pumped up – it pauses for neither breath nor a change of colostomy bag. Dumb fun.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



› **Certificate** 12A **Director** Patrick Hughes **Starring** Sylvester Stallone, Mel Gibson, Harrison Ford, Antonio Banderas, Jason Statham **Screenplay** Sylvester Stallone, Creighton Rothenberger, Katrin Benedikt **Distributor** Lionsgate **Running time** 126 mins

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ISLAND OF LEMURS: MADAGASCAR

★★★ Out 5 September

MORGAN FREEMAN (WHO ELSE?) narrates this science-lite short that aims to do for lemurs – our oldest primate ancestor – what *Meerkat Manor* did for those upstanding fellows. Well, sort of: the gorgeous 3D certainly brings us nose to tail with these heavily anthropomorphised cuties, even if the actual wildlife lesson's a bit thin on the ground, owing to a very reduced running time. And while equal – if not greater – screen time is afforded those humans attempting to save them "one generation at a time", the bigger issue of the Madagascan islanders' complicity in their endangerment is decidedly soft-soaped. **Ali Catterall**

› **Certificate** U **Running time** 39 mins

A SPELL TO WARD OFF THE DARKNESS

★★★ Out 12 September

EXPERIMENTAL FILMMAKERS BEN Rivers and Jake Williams team up on this strange, dreamlike triptych. It centres on a brooding, barely sketched character (Robert Lowe) searching for meaning by embracing life in an Estonian commune, before leaving it all behind to live alone, silently, in the woods. Eventually, he goes on to embrace the darkness of the title by fronting a Norwegian black metal band, howling into the inky cave of a venue while slathered in white corpse paint. It's a film of contrasts – community and solitude, silence and primal noise, darkness and light – beautifully shot, wilfully slow and enjoyably baffling. **Emma Johnston**

› **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 99 mins

AT BERKELEY

★★ Out 12 September

THINK A FOUR-HOUR, NARRATIVE-FREE documentary in which we peep in on board meetings and lectures with unnamed bigwigs at one of America's most prestigious universities sounds boring? Well you'd be right about that, as it is. But marginally less so than you'd imagine. The loose thread holding it all together is the angst over funding for the newly financially squeezed US middle classes – not exactly the most urgent charity case in the world. But in those moments when the students' brains kick into gear to argue complex subjects, it at least becomes like a soothing academic lava lamp bubbling away in the corner of the room. **Emma Johnston**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 244 mins

IF I STAY

★★ Out now

WHERE'S AN F-BOMB WHEN YOU need one? TV veteran R.J. Cutler's sappy riff on Gayle Forman's young adult weepie novel expands Chloë Grace Moretz's CV – there's no swearing, vampirism, telekinesis – but as between-life-and-death movies go it makes *Ghost* look like *Mulholland Dr*. The cast provide what life it has: Moretz is winning as Mia, a teen cellist left in a coma after a car crash. Jamie Blackley makes light work of her rock'n'roll boyfriend too. But as ghost-Mia reflects on her life, the film strains painfully to ingratiate itself: Hit-Girl would positively gag on its phoney hipster-speak, pop homilies and groovy parents. **Kevin Harley**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 107 mins

THE INTERNET'S OWN BOY: THE STORY OF AARON SWARTZ

★★★ Out now

THE 2013 SUICIDE OF HACKTIVIST Aaron Swartz made him an instant martyr to internet freedom, a cause that will only be advanced by a moving documentary that puts the blame for his death squarely on the unfeeling US authorities determined to make an example of him in this age of Snowden and WikiLeaks. That his "crime" was merely to liberate academic texts kept behind a corporate firewall makes his persecution all the harsher – though Brian Knappenberger's film arguably undermines its case a tad by relying so heavily on interviews Swartz gave to *Russia Today*, hardly a beacon of democratic transparency. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 105 mins (tbc)

ALL CHEERLEADERS DIE

★★★ Out 12 September

IN 2001, LUCKY MCKEE AND CHRIS Sivertson debuted with *All Cheerleaders Die*, a scrappy, gory teen flick shot on video and serving up a Wicca-laden face-off between football jocks and pom-pom girls. Both have since made quality adaptations of Jack Ketchum's controversial writings (*The Lost*, *The Woman*) and now reunite to have a second bite at the movie that popped their cherries. Blending genres, tropes and tones with gleeful abandon, *All Cheerleaders Die* 2.0 sees four mean girls brought back from the dead to exact some hungry, horny revenge on the misogynistic team. Young, far-from-dumb and full of comeuppances. **Jamie Graham**

› **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 89 mins

STEP UP: ALL IN

★★ Out now

TAKING ITS CUE FROM THE FAST & *Furious* franchise, the fifth *Step Up* raids the casts of the four previous installments to assemble a new/old dance crew led by previous sequels *Step Up 2: The Streets*' Briana Evigan and *Step Up 4: Miami Heat*'s Ryan Guzman. (Expecting to see Channing Tatum? You must be joking.) It then carts them off to Las Vegas for a winner-takes-all competition, with all the 3D crunking and Nike product placement the series demands. As its title suggests, this is pretty much the last throw of the dice for a dance saga that more ran out of juice a couple of sequels ago. The set-pieces, though, still deliver the requisite pizzazz. **Neil Smith**

› **Certificate** PG **Running time** 112 mins

HERCULES

★★★ Out now

'BRETT RATNER'S HERCULES' ARE words to strike fear into the bravest of hearts but this is more sly and sprightly than we had any right to expect. Maintaining a neat balance of camp and solemnity, it sees the Greek god (Dwayne Johnson in a fetching shoulder-length wig) and his band of trusted allies rattle through Greece on the kind of odyssey Homer might have scribbled if he had ADD. The visuals are often murky but the CGI and 3D are decent, and helicopter shots over rocky mountains bring some *Lord Of The Rings* sweep to proceedings. Fast and fun, it's a sound victory over Renny Harlin's laborious *The Legend Of Hercules*. **Jamie Graham**

› **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 98 mins

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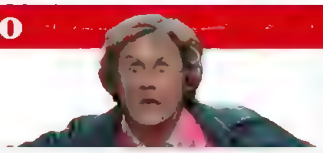
Box office charts 14.07.14 – 10.08.14

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
A commercial *and* critical hit, thank Groot. Though you have to worry product placement is getting a little out of hand when choccy bars are being referenced in movie titles.

THE INBETWEENERS 2
Biggest opening day for a comedy *ever* in the UK; biggest opening week of 2014... the boys say this is it, but c'mon, they'll be doing sequels till they're Stannah Stairlift wankers.

HERCULES
The Rock-buster benefited from ace marketing: coming out after the bar-lowering *The Legend Of Hercules*. The critics agree! It's the best Hercules movie of the last four months!

UK TOP 10



POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes ★★★★	£27.1m	£27.1m	4
2	Guardians Of The Galaxy ★★★★	£13.8m	£13.8m	2
3	The Inbetweeners 2 ★★★★	£12.5m	£12.5m	1
4	How To Train Your Dragon 2 ★★★★	£9.9m	£19.5m	7
5	Transformers: Age Of Extinction ★★★	£7.3m	£19.1m	5
6	Hercules ★★★	£4.6m	£4.6m	3
7	The Purge: Anarchy ★★	£4m	£4m	3
8	Mrs. Brown's Boys: D'Movie ★	£2m	£13.9m	7
9	The Nut Job ★★	£1.8m	£1.8m	2
10	Earth To Echo ★★★	£1.7m	£1.7m	3

US TOP 10

POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	Guardians Of The Galaxy ★★★★	$176.5m	$176.5m	2
2	Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes ★★★★	$125.2m	$197.8m	5
3	Lucy ★★★★	$97.5m	$97.5m	3
4	The Purge: Anarchy ★★	$68.6m	$68.6m	4
5	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles N/A	$65.6m	$65.6m	1
6	Hercules ★★★	$63.5m	$63.5m	3
7	Planes: Fire & Rescue ★★★	$53m	$53m	4
8	Sex Tape ★★	$36.9m	$36.9m	4
9	Transformers: Age Of Extinction ★★★	$34m	$242.9m	7
10	Tammy ★★	$25.7m	$82.7m	6

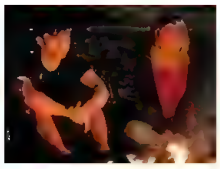
THE PURGE: ANARCHY
If the all-crime-is-legal series extends to part three, how about adding an incentive scheme? Convert arson into air miles! Assault and battery? A spa weekend for all the family!

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
A more successful reboot than the cowabungle of 2007's *TMNT*, which broke new ground in having computer-animated characters that looked fed up with their own movie.

LUCY
Given how well her actioners do, maybe Scar-Jo could retcon some of her artier work: 'Glocks In Translation'; 'The Other Boleyn Girl Who Will Hand You Your Own Head, Bitch'.

Still out, still good...

Our pick of the movies out now



WHAT IF? ★★★★
"A winning romcom that punches well above its weight thanks to two well-cast leads... Zoe Kazan is adorability personified, while Daniel Radcliffe takes his most audacious step away from *Potter* to date. Terrific support from Adam Driver too."

TWO DAYS, ONE NIGHT ★★★★
"The Dardenne brothers are breaking through without selling out... As an ordinary woman on the edge, Marion Cotillard is excellent, the camera rarely leaving her as she cycles from deep despair to tiny triumphs."

THE CONGRESS ★★★★
"Featuring a career-best performance from Robin Wright and some tremendously twisted animation, this is a weird and wonderful sci-fi satire. Director Ari Folman's (*Waltz With Bashir*) bold, eccentric ideas never fail to astound."

Coming soon...

The big hitters on the cards for October

The last time we were promised 'the untold story' – *The Amazing Spider-Man* – the film didn't actually tell it, bumping the big stuff to part two to fit in scenes of kindly crane operators. But we're confident that *Dracula Untold* (3 Oct) will fully reveal the blood-soaked path from Vlad The Impaler to shouting "One-ah! Two-ah!" on *Sesame Street*. Also out 3 Oct, two films that wouldn't know what to say to each other at a party: David Fincher's tricksy mystery *Gone Girl* and *Dolphin Tale 2*. A week later, 10 Oct, there's *Annabelle*, a spin-off for the creepy doll from *The Conjuring* (does that mean there's hope for *Insidious*' rocking horse?). There's also *The Maze Runner* and *One Direction: Where We Are – The Concert Film*, both with young men dashing tirelessly about. Oct 17, meanwhile, Robert Downey Jr. turns legal eagle in The Judge and there's also the no-space-to-write-it-in-full *TMNT*.

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www.pridemovie.co.uk @PrideMovieUK

FILM RECOMMENDS...

"Forget *Billy Elliot* and *The Full Monty* – if you're looking for warm-hearted UK comedy drama, then *Pride* is sure to become your new favourite feelgood movie. Based on the true life story of a group of gay and lesbian activists who supported a community of Welsh miners during the '80s strike, it's uplifting, inspiring and affecting in equal measure. A guaranteed grin-inducer."

Matt Risley, Online Editor

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SHOWING ON 22 SCREENS

SCREENING DETAILS

DATE OF SCREENING 9 September 2014 TIME 6 for 6.30pm

WHERE cineworld CINEMAS

ABERDEEN Union Square 26 First Level Mall, Union Square, Aberdeen, AB11 5R
BIRMINGHAM 181 Broad Street, Birmingham, B15 1DA
BOLTON The Valley, 15 Eagley Brook Way, Bolton, BL1 8TS
BRADFORD Bradford Leisure Exchange, Vicar Lane, Bradford, BD1 5LD
BRISTOL Hengrove Leisure Park, Hengrove Way, Bristol, BS14 0HR
CAMBRIDGE Cambridge Leisure Park, Clifton Way, Cambridge, CB1 7DY
CARDIFF Mary Ann Street, Cardiff, CF10 2EN
CRAWLEY Unit 1, Crawley Leisure Park, London Road, Crawley, RH10 8LR
DUNDEE Camperdown Leisure Park, Kingsway West, Dundee, DD2 4TF
EDINBURGH Fountain Park, 130/3 Dundee Street, EH11 1AP
ENFIELD Southbury Leisure Park, 208 Southbury Road, EN1 1YQ
GLASGOW 7 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3AB
HIGH WYCOMBE Eden, Denmark Street, HP11 2DB
LIVERPOOL Montrose Way, Edge Lane Retail Park, Liverpool, L13 1EW
MILTON KEYNES Xscape, 602 Marlborough Gate, MK9 3XS
NOTTINGHAM The Corner House, 29 Forman Street, Nottingham, NG1 4AA
SHAFTSBURY AVENUE 13 Coventry Street, Piccadilly, London, W1D 7DH
SHEFFIELD Valley Centertainment, Broughton Lane, Sheffield, S9 2EP
WANDSWORTH Southside Shopping Centre, Wandsworth, SW18 4TF
WEST INDIA QUAY Hertsmere Road, West India Quay, London, E14 4AL
WOLVERHAMPTON Bentley Bridge Leisure Park, Wednesfield Way, WV11 1TZ
YEOVIL Old Station Way, Unit 1, Yeo Leisure Park, Yeovil

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THE COMIC-BOOK PREVIEW

FROM DAWN OF JUSTICE TO AGE OF ULTRON AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN, TOTAL FILM BRINGS YOU THE BIGGEST COMIC-BOOK BLOCKBUSTERS COMING YOUR WAY...

WORDS JAMIE GRA

LORD OF THE SPIES

KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE DOES FOR ESPIONAGE MOVIES WHAT KICK-ASS DID FOR SUPERHEROES. WRY, WICKED AND BOASTING COLIN FIRTH AS AN IMPECCABLY DRESSED KILLING MACHINE, IT'S BOND GONE GONZO.

Leavesden Studios, July 2013. The interior of a softly lit English pub floats in the middle of a dark, cavernous hangar like a single star in space. Tables, chairs, framed pictures, a row of barstools, a line of bottled spirits. Standing in the centre of the sticky floor is a bespectacled Colin Firth in a double-breasted suit, tie knotted tightly, hair parted with a ruler, clutching an umbrella. All he wanted is a quiet pint to decompress after a hard day's work but a gaggle of goons won't allow it so he's taken to his feet to request, politely, they keep their distance. Scoffing, they wade in swinging. In a blur of motion that Firth will later describe as "not quite fighting, not quite dancing", the 53-year-old actor best known for playing uptight, privileged gentlemen in period dramas is suddenly a spinning, weaving, thrusting dervish, his twirling umbrella whistling through the smoky air to smash the hefty dudes to the floor.

Well, that's the plan. Only it's a fiendishly difficult combination, the choreography is timed to the split second and it requires a number of takes to get it right. Firth, who's trained three hours a day for six months to turn his body into a deadly weapon, gets faster and fiercer with each effort.

> **"IT WAS VERY PAINFUL AND VERY INTIMIDATING. BUT THEN I WARMED TO IT. I GOT STRONGER..."**
> **Colin Firth**

He also gets noticeably more annoyed. Not with the crew, not with the thugs, not with his team of trainers who hover in the shadows. He's angry – furious – with himself, his disgruntled mutters turning to vocalised self-admonishments turning to bellowed expletives when he stabs himself in the neck with the brolly. Walking briskly into the darkness to reconfigure his composure, he returns with steel in his eyes and promptly hands the trio of goons their pimply asses on a silver platter.

"You were not meant to see that," Firth says when informed by a PR that *Total Film* is stood at the sidelines. He's visibly irked, understandably so, and his mood isn't helped any by the stifling heat in the hangar – beads of sweat glisten on his forehead and darken his crisp white collar. Ever the pro and ever the, well, gentleman, however, he takes a breath to regain equanimity. "We had this team of 10 to 15 guys training me to do moves that my body had never been through before," he explains. "It was very painful and very intimidating. But then I did warm to it. I actually got stronger. And it was part of the storytelling."

Firth is playing superspy Harry Hart, codenamed Galahad, in Matthew Vaughn's fifth movie as director, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*. Based on an original idea by Vaughn and comic-book hero Mark Millar, the team who brought us *Kick-Ass*, it introduces a covert >>

For your eyes only: Harry Hart (Colin Firth) shows Eggsy (Taron Egerton) the ropes; (far right, top), Eggsy's trial by train; (far right, bottom) Hart's umbrella is more than meets the eye.

intelligence agency that operates above MI5 and MI6 – a league of extraordinarily skilled gentlemen whose immaculate manners and keen sartorial sense are matched only by their ability to prise open a can of whoopass on any bad guys requiring lessons in comportment. With a set number of spies allowed to sit at this modern-day Round Table, a new batch of agents must be trained up each time a member dies, with just one of their number then selected to become a Kingsman. The candidates are typically Oxbridge graduates though Harry's thrown a chav with a criminal record: Gary 'Eggsy' Unwin (newcomer Taron Egerton) who he must transform into not just an operative but a gentleman also. *Pygmalion* with guns, anyone?

The set is buzzing. Outside the hangar where Firth has (unwittingly) shown us his moves are more hangars and enough office buildings to put Kafka in a funk. The props warehouse is as big as a football field and resembles the closing scene of *Citizen Kane*. It's a job just to edge past the mountainous piles of leather briefcases, 1930s lighters, Conway Stewart pens, watches, parachutes, exosuits, a re-kitted black cab and much, much more. Exotic paraphernalia stretches wall-to-wall, ceiling-to-floor.

> **"I REALISED KINGSMEN HAD TO BE DONE NOW. THE SPY MOVIE NEEDED TO BE REINVENTED"**
> **Matthew Vaughn**

Vaughn and his crew are in the next hangar shooting the trainees playing charades. Dogs of all shapes and sizes are slouched left, right and centre, for one of the assignments handed to the cadets is to select a puppy and raise it as a sidekick. The scene presents Roxy (Sophie Cookson), the only female apprentice, acting out *Waiting For Godot* to her fellow trainees as a dolly-mounted camera glides towards and then through the group to locate Eggsy sitting cross-legged on his bunk, reading. By his side is a Pug named George who's proving resistant to direction.

"No, the dog's scratching," sighs Vaughn. Reset. "He's looking the wrong way." Reset. "George, look over here. George? GEORGE!" Finally the Pug focuses but he's now affronted by the camera floating towards him. Glaring down the barrel of the lens, he unleashes a volley of barks. And again. And again. Eventually, after Fincher-levels of dedication, cast, camera and canine nail it. "Cut!" cries Vaughn. "Good boy George!"

Rewind a couple of years and Matthew Vaughn looked likely to follow *X-Men: First Class* with *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*. He and Simon Kinberg had penned the treatment and Vaughn was twiddling his thumbs while he waited for the script to arrive. Bryan Singer would have first option to direct but Vaughn was the go-to guy should Singer choose to pass. Then a dilemma presented itself.

"Mark Millar and I had been discussing the *Kingsman* movie for a couple of years and then he rang me up and said, 'I've done the comic'," says the director, his confident voice drowning out a ceaseless cacophony of sawing, drilling and yapping. Bedecked in obligatory filmmaker-on-set cap and sporting a tidy beard and dark-rimmed spectacles, he's a charismatic, likeable presence. "I was like, 'What the fuck are you talking about, you've done the comic? This was just an idea we had.' But then I read it and this movie just exploded in my head."

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Like buses, the scripts for *Kingsman: The Secret Service* and *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* arrived at the same time. Vaughn had a choice to make. "Fox weren't thrilled when I said I was doing *Kingsman*," he says. "They thought I was definitely doing *Days Of Future Past*. *I* thought I was. But I realised *Kingsman* had to be done *now*. The spy movie needed to be reinvented. And it was *my* franchise. On *Days Of Future Past*... Having to wait to see if Bryan wanted to do it was just weird. I want to be in control of my destiny, not waiting. I felt like Bryan had let me play with his toys and I'd had a good time but it was time to give them back."

Decision made, Vaughn set about securing some first-class actors. In support roles he positioned Michael Caine ("I just said to him, 'tap into the *Zulu* Caine please'") and his old mucker Mark Strong ("It's the first time I've played a good guy for Matthew. Merlin trains the newcomers," says Strong). As Eggsy, after hundreds of auditions and a final three that included Jack O'Connell and John Boyega, he cast Egerton from TV series *The Smoke*. And for lisping arch-villain Valentine, who boasts a double-amputee henchwoman with blades for legs (Sofia Boutella) and who operates from a base carved into the side of a volcano, he landed Samuel L. Jackson.

"Valentine is Steve Jobs in blackface," says Jackson around the edges of an electronic cigarette. "He has a lot of money, a lot of tech savvy. He's not trying to destroy the world; he's trying to save it. Let's call him an environmentalist. You find out pretty early what his goals are. They're environmental and, I guess, survivalist. But he's ruthless."

From the off, Vaughn knew who he needed to fill the handmade shoes of elegant and eloquent super-spy Harry Hart. The only question was whether Firth would accept the role of *another* quintessential English gentleman (albeit one who could go one-on-three against Bond, Bourne and Bauer) – he has, in the past, complained of the persistence of his Mr. Darcy image. >>

ON-SET SPY

Shooting a scene in which Merlin assigns the trainees to all try to get off with the same target at a swish social event, Mark Strong stooped to have his bald head dusted down after each take.

VIEW TO KILL

SAMUEL L. JACKSON TALKS PLAYING BADDIE VALENTINE, TARANTINO'S THE HATEFUL EIGHT AND AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON...

How was it having a lair inside a volcano?
[*Raises eyebrows*] Lair? I never thought of it like that, I thought of it as a place of gathering. But I guess it was a lair. They built a part of it. It's great to have that setting. It gives you a feeling of control that a character like that needs because he's a control freak.

Taron Egerton has star quality. How did you rate him to work with?
There's a lot to be said for meeting people off set before you go to work. The level of awe he had... Meeting people is kind of strange for me, sometimes, because they're like, "Oh my god..." I've been in some films that were popular but I'm just another actor. He relaxed into the role.

Presumably you never get starstruck anymore?
Sometimes. When we had the first read through of the *Tarzan* [*the upcoming Alexander Skarsgård-starring adaptation*] script, I was sat next to John Hurt. I was speechless.

Talking of readings, did you enjoy the public performance of *The Hateful Eight* script?
I did theatre for a long time so it's basically the same thing. It's not often you read something that excites you. A person writes a role like that for you and you read it out loud and look at the faces you might end up doing it with... It makes you really want to put it on film so we can have it forever.

And how's *Age Of Ultron* going?
I'm done with *Ultron*. It was a drive-by. I showed up and said my words. It's a superhero movie and Nick Fury's not a superhero. They're fighting something I can't necessarily help with.

Do you stay on top of the ever-expanding Marvel universe?
I have a good overview. I'm in and out of the comic-book store twice a month and the guys give me the comics and say, "This is happening, and this and this..." I'm pretty plugged in.

"Ah, it's all bollocks, he loves it," laughs Vaughn. "Put him in a pair of glasses, a suit, make him look attractive, and he's happy as shit. There was no problem getting him to do it."

Firth agrees, waving away suggestions that he's ever rallied against typecasting. "When I'm walking around in my kitchen I don't feel pigeon-holed," he says. "I don't think or strategise, I don't have game plans. I don't have anything to escape from because I don't feel trapped. It's just nice to work with someone like Matthew who defines the entire world you're going to work in."

Ah yes, the world. *Kingsman: The Secret Service* offers a cinematic universe that is at once familiar and new, with Vaughn aiming to revive the flavours of the spy movies he grew up on while putting his own anarchic stamp on the action.

"I'm trying to do a modern version of the early Bond films, *The Avengers*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* [*which, incidentally, his old partner Guy Ritchie is shooting on the next stage*]. But it's not *Austin Powers* because that's a parody. I'm making a proper movie. Like *Kick-Ass*, this is serious when it's serious, action when it's action, funny when it's funny. But it's still got heart and it's about a character going on a fucking insane journey."

Like classic Bond movies, *Kingsman: The Secret Service* is full of gadgets and weapons, adventure and flamboyance. Just look at the Savile Row-styled store that *Total Film* wanders into. Adorned with gorgeous threads, handsome accessories (hand grenades masquerading as lighters, pens full of poison) and racks of sleek, many-sized weapons, a touch of the fitting-room mirror sees the entire shop descend into the heart of the Kingsman secret HQ.

"I shat myself when *Skyfall* came out because I'd literally finished the script five days before, and everyone, including *Total Film*, were going on about how funny *Skyfall* was, how it had gone back to old Bond," winces Vaughn. "So I was watching it literally going, 'Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck'. I had to watch it twice. But it didn't have much humour. It's a great movie, but it's not funny. My thing about *Bond*, *Bourne*, all these modern spy movies, is they're sort of interchangeable. I wanted to do something that no one's seen for a long time."

Vaughn is renowned as a perfectionist who oversees every detail of every department. Jackson says, "I haven't worked with a lot of directors who have that autonomy. It's refreshing to be on a set without a lot of suits around, treating the director like a puppet." Firth agrees: "He loves the cars, aeroplanes, glasses, cigarette lighters, jackets, shirts, shoes," he says. "He's also interested in the way a person walks and talks, and the colour palette. He has a very, very strong view, to the extent that we won't shoot a scene that day if *one* of those details is not right in his mind."

"All the heads of departments hate me," Vaughn laughs. "Trust me, I'm a pain in the arse. My wife always says to me, 'Why can't you do that when we're decorating the house?' She's like, 'What do you want to do with the kitchen?' And I'm like, 'I don't know'. She's like, 'What do you mean, you don't know? You just designed a whole world but you can't design a kitchen?'"

One thing Vaughn most certainly can design is a set-piece. By the time *Total Film* meets up with the director and his principal cast in June, 11 months on from the set visit, he's cut together 13 minutes of action footage to provide a taster: the umbrella take-down in the pub, the recruits awakening to find their bunkroom flooding with water, a balls-to-the-wall car chase... Everything fizzes with verve and imagination.

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From Britain with love: Harry shows Eggsy the secret entrance; (far left, top) Eggsy hones his survival skills; (far left, bottom) Valentine (Samuel L. Jackson) picks his props.

"IT'S MY FINAL WORD, MY PHD ON THE GENRE. GOD KNOWS WHAT I'LL DO NEXT" Matthew Vaughn

Egerton still can't quite believe it. "I had fitness training, weapons training, driving training ," he recalls. "I remember seeing stuntmen perform some of the things I'd have to do in eight weeks' time and it took my breath away. The ambition and scale and style and tone of the action... I really don't think there's been anything like it."

Vaughn concurs. "There are scenes where people's jaws hit the fucking ground," he promises. "This is an R-rated movie full of inventive action. We get to do stuff that PG-13 movies can't. Beautifully choreographed, over the top, insane action." And Fox were OK with that? "We financed the movie, same as *Kick-Ass*," he shrugs. "Fox are distributing and they asked about a PG-13. I said, 'Well, we can make it a PG-13 – give me an extra $80m and I'll do some PG-13 set-pieces. Studios are good at what they do, but... let's put it this way. On the Friday that *Guardians Of The Galaxy* came out, all the studios were saying, 'This is going to be the first time Marvel fail; they've got a talking tree and a raccoon and silly music, it's funny and quirky and original.' Cut to Monday morning and they're going, 'We want funny and quirky and original, where do we get a movie like that?' This movie is a far easier film for Hollywood to accept, post-*Guardians*."

A further two months on, in early August, Vaughn is on the phone. He's ducked out of the cutting room to grab a coffee with extra sugar – "I'm sooo fucked" – but the movie is finished bar the odd tweak. He talks fast down the line.

"It really plays," he says. "We did test screenings and the main thing viewers said was, 'It's like Tarantino's done a Bond movie'. I've taken everything I've learned from *Lock Stock...*, *Snatch*, *Layer Cake*, *Kick-Ass*, *X-Men*, and I've put them all into this. It's my final word, my PhD on the genre. God knows what I'm going to do next but I know it'll be completely different, a bloody romcom or something." He slurps at his coffee and laughs. "Cut To 'Kingsman 2: The Sequel'..." TF

***Kingsman: The Secret Service* opens on 12 February.**

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ZEROES TO HEROES

COLIN FIRTH ISN'T THE ONLY SURPRISE ACTOR TO MUSCLE IN ON THE ACTION GENRE...

MERYL STREEP
THE RIVER WILD (1994)

The classy then-double (now triple) Oscar winner suddenly grew a pair of biceps to take on Kevin Bacon's armed killer and a rampaging river in Curtis Hanson's action-adventure.

LIAM NEESON
TAKEN (2008)

No one expected Oskar Schindler's metamorphosis into a deadly daddy who uses knives, guns and his bare hands to kill everyone while rescuing his daughter.

HELEN MIRREN
RED (2010)

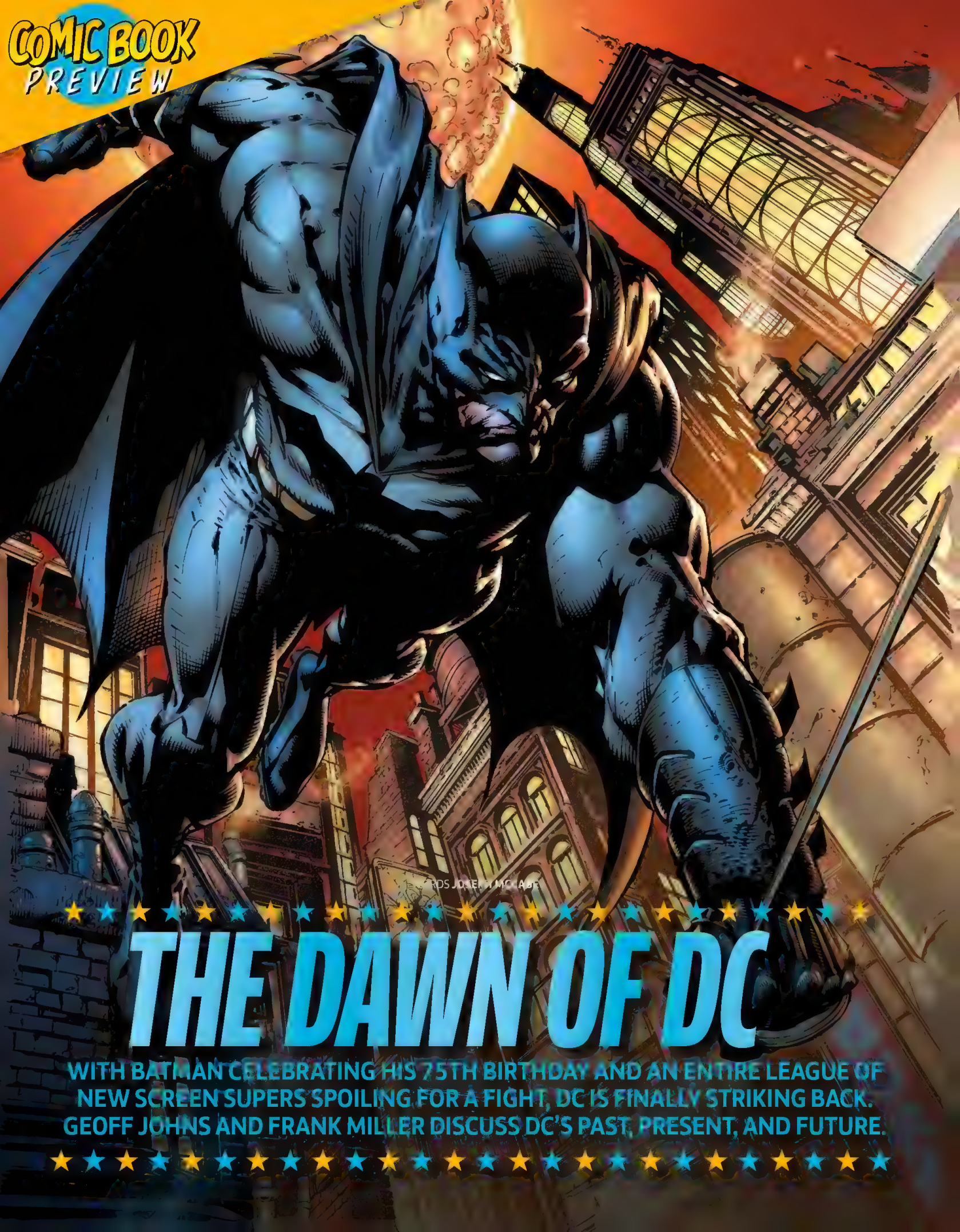
She won an Academy Award playing the Queen and then cut loose in this bullet-ridden geri-actioner and its sequel. Note: the Armani purse she uses as a weapon is her own.

MICHAEL CERA
SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD (2010)

Leo and Keanu had previously morphed into action men, but weedy, nerdy Cera? Wow. Powered up by love, he takes fighting to the next level to defeat his girlfriend's evil exes.

JONAH HILL
21 JUMP STEET (2012)

Hill lost 40lbs to perform many of his own stunts while playing undercover cop Schmidt, partner to Channing Tatum's Jenko, but still remained cuddly and goofy enough to elicit a few belly laughs.



THE DAWN OF DC

WITH BATMAN CELEBRATING HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY AND AN ENTIRE LEAGUE OF NEW SCREEN SUPERS SPOILING FOR A FIGHT, DC IS FINALLY STRIKING BACK. GEOFF JOHNS AND FRANK MILLER DISCUSS DC'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

Comic-book quiz time – who came first, *X-Men: Days of Future Past* speedster Quicksilver or DC's marathon man The Flash? *Avengers* archer Hawkeye or DC's Green Arrow? How about *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*'s winged wonder Falcon or DC's Hawkman? It might not be obvious from their recent film exposure, but in each case DC was the forerunner.

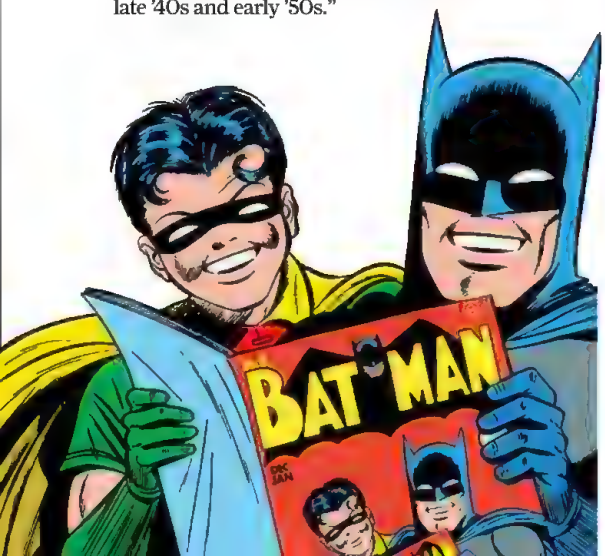
Since Superman first took flight in the pages of 1938's *Action Comics #1*, DC has specialised in archetypes, from the Man of Steel's modern-day-Moses to the Aladdin-like Green Lantern. But the DC heroes were created for children in the Great Depression, while their Marvel counterparts were concocted for a generation of hip teens in the 1960s. While DC's characters were vulnerable to Kryptonite and the colour yellow, Marvel's wrestled with more relatable weaknesses like guilt and vanity. It's no surprise then that Marvel comic books have proven far more adaptable as blockbuster all-ages films.

The exception, of course, is Batman. Bob Kane and Bill Finger's Caped Crusader, born of violence and haunted by the loss of his parents, has made his mark in almost every conceivable medium, in entertainment aimed at children and adults. While his pulp magazine forebears like the Shadow have all fallen, the Dark Knight has, for 75 years, continued to rise.

"Batman, somewhere along the line, like Zorro, became a folk hero," says Frank Miller. Chatting with *Total Film* at this year's San Diego Comic-Con, the black-garbed, fedora-topped writer and artist used the character to forever alter the medium in his landmark 1986 miniseries *The Dark Knight Returns* and its 1987 follow-up, the definitive origin story, *Batman: Year One*.

"Each generation wants to celebrate that folk hero because we each grew up with him. The best Batman I grew up with was written by Denny O'Neil and drawn by Neal Adams... We know how old he is, but he's as fresh as can be. At his origin the comics industry was trapped by enormous censorship. But as time has opened things up, we've gotten to express ourselves a lot better."

"Also," laughs Miller, "there is a certain sexiness to a character who dresses up like a bad guy and throws people through windows. Batman brings an edge that most superheroes don't. Most of them were sanitized during the late '40s and early '50s."



"SO MANY PEOPLE BRING THEIR LOVE OF BATMAN TO EVERYTHING THEY ARE DOING"

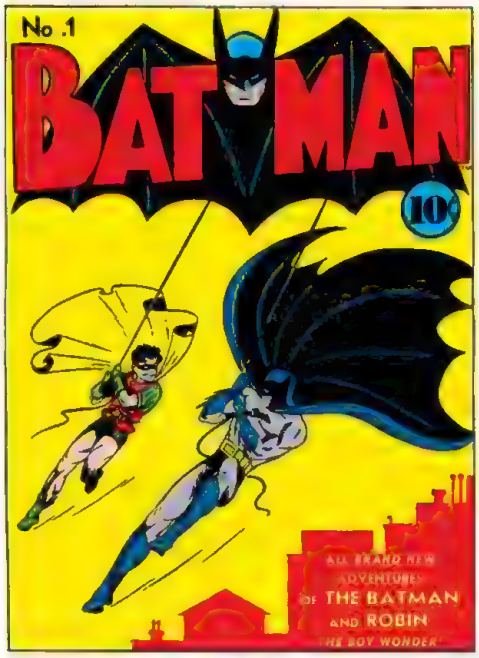
Geoff Johns Chief Creative Officer DC

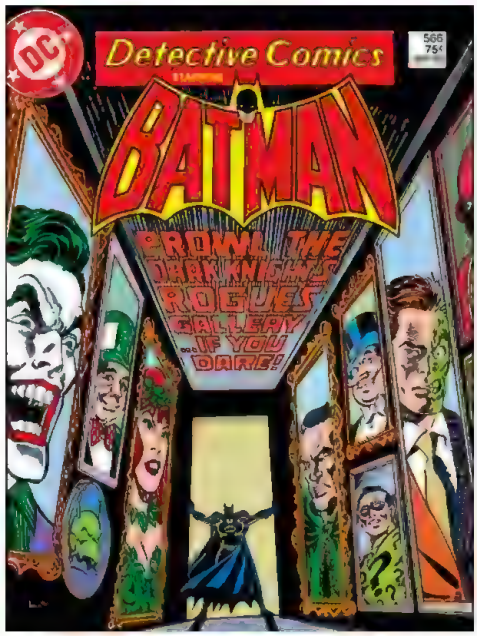
"He's the most elastic character in fiction," says Geoff Johns, DC's Chief Creative Officer, "not only in publishing but in cartoons for kids and videogames like Rocksteady's *Arkham* series. There's no other character in fiction who has had more stories told about them. That's because Batman's so human. [*DC's publisher*] Dan [*DiDio*] always says – and *Gotham* illustrates it – that his parents could get killed today or 70 years ago and the origin story's still intact. He's a timeless character, and so many people tap into that and then bring their love of Batman to everything they're doing – film, TV, games, comic books. I can't imagine another character that has this many tales woven by this many creators in human history."

Gotham – Warner Brothers' new TV show depicting the early years of Bruce Wayne, Commissioner Gordon, and Batman's rogues gallery – is just the crest of a new wave. For as Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan borrowed from Miller's work in directing their mega-hit movies, so producer Greg Berlanti took his cue from Nolan in chronicling the exploits of another urban vigilante, Green Arrow. The resulting TV show, *Arrow*, has surpassed Marvel's *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* as the leading fan-favourite TV take on superheroes. A spin-off was inevitable, and Green Arrow's fellow Justice Leaguer The Flash gets a show of his own this autumn.

The Flash represents Warner Bros' new attitude towards its DC properties. Lighter in tone than *Arrow*, it features a world full of super-powered heroes and villains in which costumes are fun as well as functional – and in which crime can be fought in the sunlight. But like *Arrow*, it continues the studio's policy of showcasing its many properties. This year the two shows will introduce such comic staples as Firestorm and the Atom. And the new *Constantine*, based on DC's long-running occult detective title *Hellblazer*, will bring the company's stable of supernatural characters to television. Another supernatural title, the horror comedy *iZombie*, will bow early next year from *Veronica Mars* producer Rob Thomas.

Meanwhile, DC's cinematic universe, which began with last year's Nolan-produced, Zack Snyder-directed *Man Of Steel*, continues with the much anticipated *Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice*. At long last, it finds comics' greatest superheroine Wonder Woman (played by Gal Gadot) making her big-screen debut; in a story inspired in part by Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns*, in which Superman (Henry Cavill) faces off against an older, world-wearier Batman (Ben Affleck). Its teaser launched to thunderous applause at Comic-Con, and the appearance of all three stars tore the roof off the six-thousand-seat Hall H. Shazam and Sandman films are expected to follow, as well as Snyder's *Justice League*, a solo Wonder Woman movie, a Flash/Green Lantern team-up film, and *Man Of Steel 2*.





Miller smiles and shrugs when asked about the offspring he's sired. "With any of these characters that have been around longer than I have, I regard what I do as part of a collective work. If it weren't for [*Batman artist*] Dick Sprang there might not be [*DC artist*] Neal Adams. If it weren't for Neal Adams there wouldn't be me. I tried to contribute and have a new take. My main motivation, by the way, in doing *Dark Knight* was that I realized I was about to turn 30, and Batman was still 29. I just could not stand him being any younger than me. So I made him old!" TF

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PREMIER LEAGUE

MOVE OVER AVENGERS: DC'S FINEST ARE COMING AND THEY'RE TAKING NO PRISONERS. BUT WHO EXACTLY ARE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE? TOTAL FILM REVEALS ALL...

WORDS **NEIL SMITH**

1 AQUAMAN

ALTER EGO Arthur Curry
POWERS Super strength, ability to breathe underwater, virtually impenetrable skin. Can also swim a bit.
FIRST APPEARED *More Fun Comics #73*, November 1941
PLAYED BY Jason Momoa...
NEED TO KNOW ...possibly, there being no firm confirmation that the *Conan* and *Game Of Thrones* star will be joining Cavill, Affleck and Gadot in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* as an aquatic ally. If he does though, expect him to stick around for the *JL* film.

2 GREEN LANTERN

ALTER EGO Coud be John Stewart, Hal Jordan or more.
POWERS Magic ring, natty mask, ability to fly and conjure green-coloured 'constructs' (weapons, vehicles, giant fists...) .
FIRST APPEARED *All-American Comics #16*, July 1940
PLAYED BY TBC
NEED TO KNOW Word is the *League* film will have a different incarnation of the Lantern than that seen in Ryan Reynolds' 2011 turkey. Dwayne Johnson ruled out playing the character, recently hinting to *TF* that he'll be playing fellow DC hero Shazam, it looks like the role is still open.

3 WONDER WOMAN

ALTER EGO Diana Prince
POWERS Lasso of truth, bulletproof bracelets, boomerang tiara, magic sword.
FIRST APPEARED *All Star Comics #8*, Dec 1941
PLAYED BY Gal Gadot
NEED TO KNOW Back when the Justice League was the Justice Society, Diana would give them a hand... as their secretary. ("That's quite an honour!" she gasped when Hawkman offered her the job.) We're betting she'll be taking names, not notes, as the new League's sole female member.

4 SUPERMAN

ALTER EGO Clark Kent
POWERS Super-human strength, X-ray/heat vision, ability to fly faster than a speeding bullet.
FIRST APPEARED *Action Comics #1*, June 1938
PLAYED BY Henry Cavill
NEED TO KNOW The Man of Steel has been a member of the Justice League of America ever since they first teamed up in 1960 to defeat alien starfish Starro the Conqueror (*The Brave And The Bold #28*), even if he was too busy in outer space to assist on that occasion. But will he be its leader in Zack Snyder's film? Not if Batman has anything to do with it...

5 BATMAN

ALTER EGO Bruce Wayne
POWERS None to speak of, though with so many neat gadgets at his disposal, who needs them?
FIRST APPEARED *Detective Comics #27*, May 1939
PLAYED BY Ben Affleck
NEED TO KNOW With Bats set to be a more seasoned crimefighter in *Dawn Of Justice* (and looking a bit underpowered next to all the supers) there may be an opportunity for the Dark Knight to adopt a more strategic role within the League's ranks. He too, as it happens, had too much on his plate to help out on their first comic-book appearance.

6 THE FLASH

ALTER EGO Barry Allen
POWERS Super speed, time travel
FIRST APPEARED *Showcase #4*, October 1956
PLAYED BY TBC...
NEED TO KNOW ...though might there be an opportunity for a crossover with the upcoming CW TV series-cum-*Arrow* spin-off? If so, that could be one hell of a break for 24-year-old actor Grant Gustin, best known up till now as warbler Sebastian in *Glee*. An earlier incarnation of The Flash (Jay Garrick) was a member of the Justice Society in the '40s.

7 CYBORG

ALTER EGO Victor Stone
POWERS Artificial intelligence, durability, advanced sensory abilities. Metal arms and legs. Rust a potential drawback.
FIRST APPEARED *DC Comics Presents #26*, October 1980
PLAYED BY Ray Fisher
NEED TO KNOW Another future Leaguer set to make an appearance in *Batman V Superman* is the hi-tech man-robot hybrid – a character that Cavill has described as "an incredible bridge between superheroes and humanity". Stage actor Fisher has already landed the role if reports are to be believed.

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ART BY JIM LEE COURTESY OF DC COMICS/DC ENTERTAINMENT

WORDS RICHARD JORDAN AND DAVE GOLDER

THREE'S COMPANY

WITH BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE ON THE WAY, TOTAL FILM TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT ITS TRINITY OF HEROES AND THEIR COMIC-BOOK INSPIRATIONS...

WONDER WOMAN

One of the most iconic heroes in comic-book history, Wonder Woman – a warrior princess who hails from a race of all-female superhumans called the Amazons – is finally making her first big-screen appearance in *Superman V Batman: Dawn Of Justice*. Armed with bulletproof bracelets, a razor-sharp throwing tiara and a 'lasso of truth', the 6ft tall Diana of Themyscira is as strong as Supes and boasts superior combat skills. Director Zack Snyder has thrown out her original red-and-blue star-spangled outfit for more battle-ready bronze armour and, according to actress Gal Gadot, she's going to need it – suggesting her Wonder Woman will be seeing her fair share of action in the film... "I've had a very serious training regimen," she says. "Kung Fu, kickboxing, sword-fighting, Brazilian jiu-jitsu... A thousand and one things!"

NEED TO READ

WONDER WOMAN CHRONICLES BOOK 1

1941-2

Wonder Woman's origin has been reinvented many times since she was created by William Moulton Marston in 1941, but it's fun to go back and rediscover the prototype peace-loving Amazon making her way in a man's world (mostly by fighting Nazis).

WONDER WOMAN VOLUME 1: GODS AND MORTALS

1987

Writer/artist George Pérez completely overhauled the character in the mid-'80s, bringing Greek myths and female empowerment to the fore. Fans adored it. The art on a Wonder Woman comic has rarely looked better.

THE NEW 52 WONDER WOMAN VOLUME 1: BLOOD 2011

The blistering current run on Wonder Woman in DC's rebooted New 52 universe is about as good as the strip has ever been, with Diana now recast as a goddess of war, facing off against a whole host of Greek deities.

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BATMAN

Ben Affleck will be bringing an "older, more advised" Batman to *Dawn Of Justice*, with a look heavily influenced by Frank Miller's seminal *The Dark Knight Returns* comic miniseries (small ears, grey suit, new Bat logo...). As for the 'versus' of the title? Looks like Affleck's costumed veteran is overly suspicious of Earth's fresh-faced new 'ally'. "Ben brings an interesting counterweight to Henry's Superman," Snyder explains. "He has the experience to paint the picture of a man who bears the scars of a seasoned vigilante. Plus, it's cool to see a crusty old Batman beating the snot out of guys!"

NEED TO READ

THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
1986

Batman may have been created in 1939, but the Batman we know today – the brooding, psychotic vigilante Dark Knight – was (re)created in 1986 in Frank Miller's seminal graphic novel. Bats even fights with Superman in it, so it's prefect prep for the new movie.

BATMAN: YEAR ONE
1987

After *The Dark Knight Returns* Miller retconned Batman's origin story in 1987's *Year One*, which retold the early days of Bruce Wayne and Jim Gordon. It's tough as nails and a certified classic – not to mention a big influence on Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins*.

BATMAN: KNIGHTFALL/ KNIGHTQUEST/ KNIGHTEND
1993-4

Tradition dictates that the Joker-centric *Killing Joke* must get a mention in any list like this, but if you're a newcomer, try the Knightfall trilogy instead. Closer to the direction of the movies, but more traditional in style, it's also a gripping tale of the fall and rise of Batman.

SUPERMAN

Henry Cavill reprises his role in this sort-of sequel, now balancing a double life as mild-mannered journo Clark Kent and Kryptonian crimefighter Superman. He's also faced with the new threat of his soon-to-be arch-nemesis Lex Luthor (played by Jesse Eisenberg – see page 86), a power-mad business magnate bent on eliminating the Man of Steel. According to Snyder, Cavill is much more comfortable in the red-and-blue suit this time around... "We've both created this guy and we can push him around a little bit," he says. "The more time I spend with Henry, the more he's Superman to me."

NEED TO READ

SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL
1986

A bold mid '80s reimagining of the origin story that touches upon all the major characters, events and mythologies from the Man Of Steel's formative years, making it the perfect Quick Guide To Superman for newcomers.

SUPERMAN FOR ALL SEASONS
1998

A four-part story (each set in a different season) of Clark Kent growing up and accepting his place in the world, narrated by four key characters in his life – his dad, Lois Lane, Lex Luthor and Lana Lang.

ALL-STAR SUPERMAN
2005-8

An epic tale which intelligently explores every facet of the Superman mythology as the Man Of Steel prepares for his imminent death (from solar radiation). A loving and affectionate celebration of everything Superman stands for.

>>

WORDS JOSEPH MCCABE

HEROES OF THE HOUR

DC'S SUPER TEAM IS OWNING THE SMALL SCREEN AS WELL AS THE BIG ONE. TOTAL FILM CATCHES UP WITH THE BRAINS BEHIND ITS ALL-NEW TELEVISION ARSENAL.

ARROW

STARRING Stephen Amell, David Ramsey, Emily Bett Rickards, John Barrowman, Katie Cassidy
ETA Autumn 2014 (Sky 1/Sky 1 HD)

IN A NUTSHELL

The Justice League's resident Robin Hood, Oliver Queen (aka Green Arrow), takes aim in this gritty origin story adaptation inspired by Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins*. Balancing soap-opera melodrama with first-rate stunts and fight choreography, *Arrow* cross-cuts between Queen's five-year evolution from shipwrecked playboy to urban antihero and his ongoing crusade to rid Starling City of corruption.

COMIC CONNECTIONS

Entering its third season, *Arrow* continues to explore the border between good and evil, delighting in pitting Queen, a former bad boy fighting to be good, against villains who challenge his moral mettle. "Every villain is the hero of their story," showrunner Marc Guggenheim tells us. "So we've written our Big Bads always with that philosophy in mind. They don't think they're evil, they just think they're doing what's necessary."

Season 1 found our hero thwarting the plans of Malcolm Merlyn – the 'Black Archer' – as portrayed by *Torchwood*'s John Barrowman, who becomes a regular in the show's third season. Season 2 saw the Arrow face off against former mentor Slade Wilson – a.k.a. Deathstroke, played by *Spartacus*' Manu Bennett – a drug-enhanced super-soldier who blamed Queen for the death of his love. And season 3's Big Bad? None other than Batman's arch-enemy, Ra's al Ghul.

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GOTHAM

STARRING Ben McKenzie, Sean Pertwee, Donal Logue, Jada Pinkett Smith, David Mazouz
ETA Late 2014 (Channel TBC)

IN A NUTSHELL

Drawing from *The Dark Knight* trilogy and *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Gotham* tells the story of Batman's city before he becomes its saviour. It charts the rise of the arch-villains, and follows Detective James Gordon as he solves the murder case of Bruce Wayne's parents.

COMIC CONNECTIONS

Will fans watch a Batman show without Batman? Creator Bruno Heller says it's his absence that distinguishes *Gotham* from other comic-book-based shows... "How do you deal with crime of this level when there are no superheroes? It's as much about the struggle that they're engaged in as waiting for a saviour. It's about men and women, not superheroes. To me, that's the more interesting story." And despite the Dark Knight's absence, the showrunners are convinced that audiences will identify with young Gordon, here painted as a sort of 21st-Century Elliot Ness. "*Gotham* is very much about Bruce Wayne, Oswald Cobblepot and Selina Kyle," says Heller, "but Gordon is the moral lynchpin of the show. It's the journey of a man who is very much about law and order to someone who accepts this dark vigilante."

THE FLASH

STARRING Grant Gustin, Candice Patton, Jesse L. Martin, Tom Cavanagh, Danielle Panabaker
ETA Late 2014 (Channel TBC)

IN A NUTSHELL

The Scarlet Speedster (a.k.a. forensic scientist Barry Allen) battles supervillains in a new *Arrow* spin-off from executive producers Greg Berlanti and Andrew Kreisberg. An optimistic, sci-fi-laced alternative to its parent show, *The Flash* also features John Wesley Shipp (star of the short-lived 1990 TV incarnation) as its hero's father.

COMIC CONNECTIONS

"It was a favourite comic book of mine as a child," says Berlanti. "Barry Allen is struck by a bolt of lightning and wakes up to find he has superhuman speed... The entire time we've been working on *Arrow* we really wanted to introduce the super-powers of the DC Universe. That's how it started." He's quick to point out, though, that *The Flash* will have a much lighter tone than its brooding sibling show. "Part of that was because, even in the comic books, Barry was a fanboy himself. He was kind of wide-eyed and couldn't believe some of the people he was hanging out with. He had a bright, blue-skies demeanour, and he was good with a quip. So you put all those things together, and it tells you the kind of tone it wants to have."

CONSTANTINE

STARRING Matt Ryan, Angélica Celaya, Harold Perrineau, Charles Halford
ETA Late 2014 (Channel TBC)

IN A NUTSHELL

Forget Keanu Reeves – this far more faithful take on DC's *Hellblazer* features blonde Brit Matt Ryan as the chain-smoking occult detective, determined to save the world – and his own sin-smeared soul – from the demonic forces that would destroy it. DC Cinematic Universe mastermind David S. Goyer produces alongside *Dexter*'s Daniel Cerone.

COMIC CONNECTIONS

According to Goyer, *Constantine* – which partners Ryan's supernatural sleuth with his comic-book buddy Zed Martin and personal driver Chas Chandler – is "not adapting any one specific storyline; we'll be sort of weaving in and out. But hardcore fans will feel that it's a very authentic interpretation of the character." "We're going straight back to the source material," agrees Cerone. "When Constantine first appeared in *Swamp Thing* [*#37, in June 1985*], that's when we're meeting him. In fact, the [*first*] storyline, 'American Gothic', heavily inspired our first-season arc. So all the things that happened to Constantine over the 30-year run in the comics, it's all ahead of him. Those are all things we can dip into and take viewers along for the journey."

>>

WORDS MATTHEW LEYLAND

CAPE CHEER

HOLY PRE-BLU-RAY RELEASE REUNION! THE STARS OF THAT '60S SHOW TALK BRIGHT KNIGHTS, BRUCE LEE AND NICKING STUFF FROM THE BATCAVE

Batmans come and Batmans go, but the 1960s TV show will never be forgotten. Colourful and camp, the 120-episode run is coming to Blu-ray and DVD this November. *Total Film* caught up with stars Adam West (Batman), Burt Ward (Robin) and Julie Newmar (Catwoman) for a trip down memory lane. To the dictaphone!

You had lots of stars on the show – any favourites?

Adam West: There were so many. Julie, I have great memories of working with you. [*Comic pause*] You want to say something, Julie, about working with me?

Julie Newmar: God. Damn. Gor. Geous. He's got great lips. When he wears that mask, oh my goodness. Especially in the soda-sipping scene in the [*spin-off*] movie.

AW: Julie was a marvellous Catwoman. She has the world's tallest legs. There was an inevitable sexual tension between her and Batman; it made it interesting for adults. We did the show on several levels, and that's the reason for its longevity.

Burt Ward: Working with Bruce Lee was a great experience. Coincidentally, before the show we used to live in the same building and sparred together. Great athlete.

JN: [*Bruce*] could knock a lit cigarette right out of your mouth without you knowing it. That's how we became such good friends.

Subsequent versions of Batman have got darker...

AW: They do their thing, we did ours. They have the Dark Knight, I'm the 'bright knight'.

JN: It was a different time. Of course, we had a bunch of wars going on, but we enjoyed the '60s, didn't we?

BW: Our show was something for everybody. We played it very straight, so for kids there was hero worship. For adults who remembered the comics, there was nostalgia. For teens – at the time an almost impossible audience to capture – the double meanings and innuendoes caught on.

What were the costumes like to wear?

BW: Horrendous. I used to call my tights the 'python pants' because they strangled me to death. And Adam, he's my dear friend, I love him to death, but he looks cross-eyed in that mask.

AW: I think any actor who plays Batman or Robin wants to complain about the costume and its restrictions in certain areas.

JN: I heard you needed a hairdryer in order to keep everything dry.

AW: I beg your pardon? That is the strangest thing you've ever said.

Did you keep many mementoes from the show?

AW: I kept a lot, especially towards the end. Some of the [*production*] guys became my friends; if I drove off with the trunk of my car slightly open, they would slip a little something in there. Now, if you'd like to buy a cape...?

Was there ever a script you just couldn't take seriously?

AW: I never took any of them seriously. But you had to play them seriously – with the right comedic timing. I remember [*guest star*] Jill St. John being burnt to a crisp on the show. Now, her character was a go-go dancer. I was meant to say, 'What a way to go'. I said 'What a way to go-go.' Nobody understood. I had to fight for weeks to do it my way.

Was it a dangerous show to make?

BW: Yes. My very first episode, I get into the Batmobile and see Adam's stuntman. I call the assistant director: "Don't I have a stuntman?" "Yes, you do. He's having coffee with Adam West. We couldn't find anyone who looked like you so you have to do your own stunts."

Was there ever a time when you wanted to stop being Batman?

AW: I did. A few months after we stopped filming. I was lucky enough to create a memorable character. But I was typecast. Every time I went into meet producers about a role, they'd say, "Oh no, we can't let Batman go to bed with the leading lady." But those dinosaurs in Hollywood are now gone. And we go on. You've just got to outlast them! TF

***Batman: The Complete Series* will be released on Blu-ray and DVD this November.** >>

KOBAL

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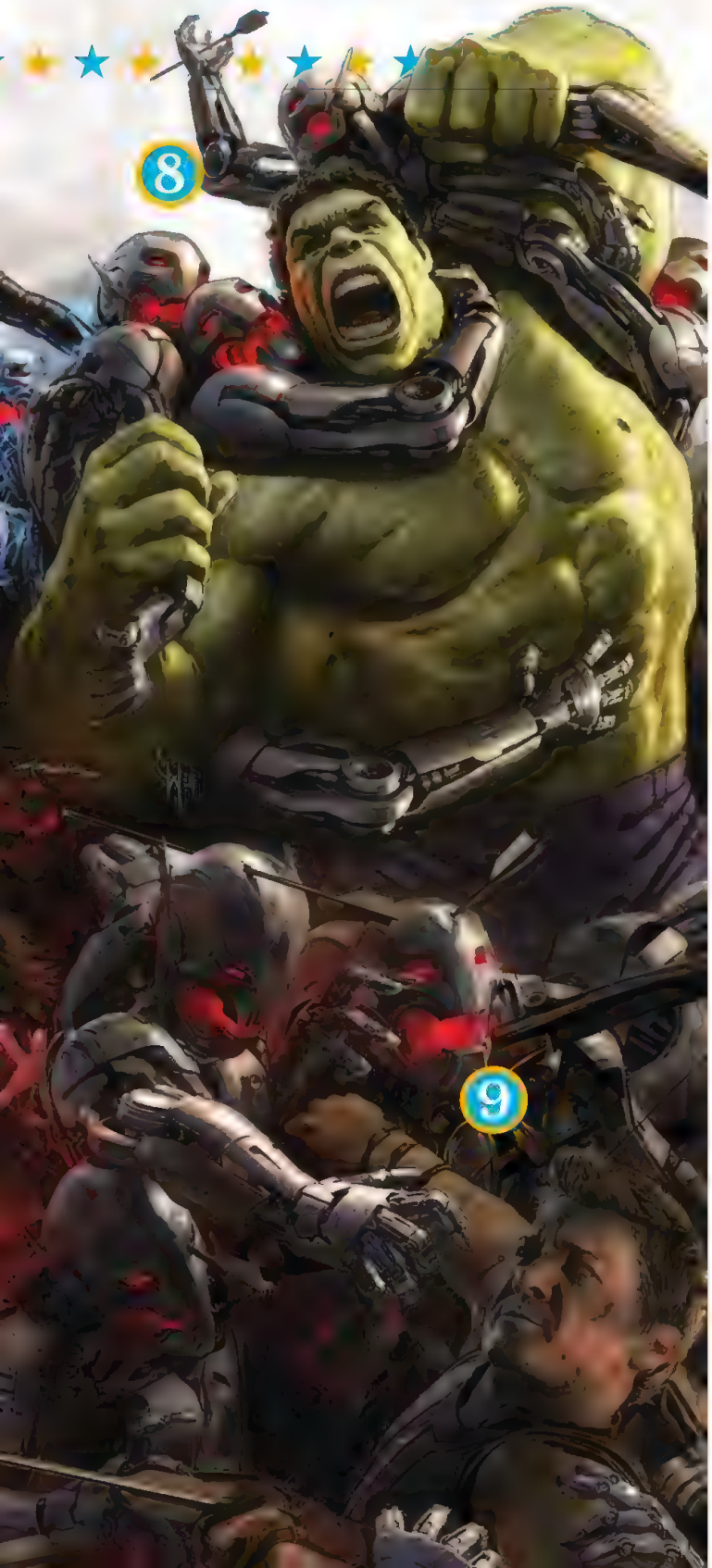
COMIC-BOOK PREVIEW

MATTHEW LEYLAND

DIE, ROBOTS!

WHO'S WHO, WHO'S NEW... STATUS UPDATES FROM THE CAST OF MARVEL'S MIGHTIEST MOVIE YET...



AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

"We've got a real nice movie coming for you next year," teased Robert Downey Jr. at this year's Comic-Con – where the concept art opposite was spectacularly unveiled. Featuring an epic (climactic?) ruck between the A-team and Ultron's robo-army, it also provides the first semi-reveal of The Vision, hovering top-left and about to wade into 2015's biggest, busiest comic-booker.

1 THE VISION

"It's the most exciting thing that's ever happened to my children," quips Paul Bettany of trading up his voice gig as J.A.R.V.I.S. for some caped action as super-android (or 'synthezoid') The Vision, a comics staple since 1968. He's keeping mum about the characters' relationship, except to confirm "there is one".

2 THOR

Hoisting the hammer for the fourth time in *Age Of Ultron*, Chris Hemsworth has revealed his biggest wish for Thor: "To turn him into a woman," a nod to the comics' recent gender-bending development. "I don't want to jinx anything, but that could be my Oscar," he adds.

3 QUICKSILVER

From *Kick-Ass* to quick-ass, Aaron Taylor-Johnson is finding his Marvel debut "overwhelming and surreal," despite his superhero previous. But he digs being part of a team where "everyone sort of stands out... they bounce off each other and there's a journey." En route, we can expect "happy and sad moments".

4 IRON MAN

"I become a little less significant every year," says Robert Downey Jr. of the ever-growing Marvel gang. "Which is fine. Because they're all just so damn good!" Elizabeth Olsen's Scarlet Witch has made a special impact: "She actually cast a spell on me two weeks ago," he reveals. "It burns," adds Jeremy Renner, ambiguously.

5 CAPTAIN AMERICA

Good news is, WW2 hero Cap is now longer a man out of time: "We're passed him being amazed at cell phones," says Chris Evans. Bad news is, "he's still looking for a place to belong" after the S.H.I.E.L.D. hit the fan in *The Winter Soldier*.

6 BLACK WIDOW

AOU will (finally) explore the Widow's backstory, says Scarlett Johansson: "These characters all have a past, and hers is a very complex one." She'll also get "some pretty good toys", not least a state-of-the-art electric Harley Davidson.

7 SCARLET WITCH

Quicksilver's sister brings a fresh element to the game: magic. "It adds something epic to the fights," reveals Marvel newbie Elizabeth Olsen. "It's not just awesome punching."

8 HULK

The eternal internal battle between Bruce Banner and his alter ego will hit new heights in *AOU*. Off-screen, big green's already won: "People just shout 'YO HULK!' at me on the street," says Mark Ruffalo.

9 HAWKEYE

The badass bowman will have more screen time – and more team interaction – in *AOU*. Meanwhile, Jeremy Renner has revealed how RDJ convinced him to become an Avenger: "He washed my car in a thong. I have photographs..." End-credits spoiler? TF

>>

WORDS **MATT MAYTUM**

MINIATURE MARVEL

TEN THINGS ABOUT ANT-MAN, THE BIG SCREEN'S SMALLEST SUPERHERO

NEED TO READ

AVENGERS: THE MANY FACES OF HENRY PYM
1962-2009

Henry Pym was the original Ant-Man. He was also Giant-Man, Yellowjacket, Goliath and, briefly, the Wasp – shrinking or growing to giant-size being the constant theme. This collection handily spotlights stories from throughout his career.

THE AVENGERS #161/2
1977

If you think Ant-Man's shrinking powers are a bit naff, then *Avengers #161/162* (included in the *Avengers Legends, Vol. 3* collection) may change your mind as Pym goes bad-ass. An added bonus is an appearance from Ultron, to get you into you an *Avengers* sequel mood.

MARVEL PREMIERE #47/48
1979

The first appearance of the Scott Lang incarnation of Ant-Man (after a cameo in *The Avengers #181*). Lang was an ex-con and Stark employee who returns to his old ways in an attempt to raise money to care for his sick daughter and nicks the Ant-Man tech.

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1 PEYTON REED HAS GEEK CRED

It was never going to be easy stepping into departing director Edgar Wright's shoes. But Peyton Reed went some way to appeasing the geeks with his Comic-Con appearance. "This is my 20th anniversary," he said of his two decades attending the convention, with Kevin Feige confirming, "His [*Ant-Man*] fandom runs deep."

2 PAUL RUDD'S GETTING (IRONICALLY) BIG

For his first superhero role as Scott Lang (AKA Ant-Man MKII), Rudd's been papped on the beach looking uncharacteristically ripped, which is causing concerns for Michael Douglas, who plays Hank Pym (he'd be MKI). "We're the first Marvel movie that's spending money on CGI to remove muscles from our hero," deadpans Reed.

3 MICHAEL DOUGLAS IS SCRATCHING AN ITCH

And we're not referring to the goatee he's grown to play Pym... "I've always looked at Marvel films with tremendous envy," admits the 69-year-old actor. Back in the '60s, Pym discovers particles enabling the shrinking supersuit to be made, only for a "tragic personal accident" to take him out of the game. Rumours that Patrick Wilson's playing the young Pym remain unconfirmed.

4 THERE'S HOPE FOR EVANGELINE LILLY

With Lilly's involvement now official, some confusion remains. Feige introduced her as Hope van Dyne, while Lilly opted for Hope Pym. "I'm playing Hank's daughter," she revealed, though Feige's name suggests her mother will be Janet van Dyne (aka The Wasp). Will Lilly be flexing her action muscles as a second-generation superhero?

5 HE WORE A YELLOW JACKET

House Of Cards actor Corey Stoll is set to play villain Darren Cross who (in a deviation from the comics) will become Yellowjacket, after stealing some Pym tech. "I was Hank Pym's mentee, and a genius scientist as well," explains Stoll. Cross becomes a business partner of Pym, but Douglas says he's "taking the company in a different, evil direction."

6 HEIST SOCIETY

With large chunks of Edgar Wright and Joe Cornish's script seemingly intact, *Ant-Man* will play out as a heist movie at heart. "Corey f**ked me good," joked Douglas of his on-screen partner turned nemesis. "So I've had to pass my powers and strengths on." Pym teams up with thief Lang in order to pull off a heist that he hopes will restore his company.

7 SCREEN TEST

The mocked-up footage screened at Comic-Con gave the Hall H crowd a small taster of what to expect from the miniature hero, with the clip showing an insect-sized Lang on the run, while Pym feeds him instructions via the headset (Feige describes *Ant-Man* as Marvel's first "mentor/mentee hero-passing-the-torch film"). Having to learn about communicating with other tiny creatures on the hoof, Lang manages to escape on the back of a nearby fly.

8 THERE WILL BE BANTER

"Superheroes? What a goddamn joke," intones Pym in a voiceover that hinted at the film's irreverent sense of humour. He also mocks Lang – "I think somebody already shrunk your balls..." – suggesting that their buddy banter might be a key selling point, with the verbal humour likely to be as important as the visual. No surprise that *Anchorman*'s Adam McKay had a hand at injecting gags into the script.

9 EXPECT PERIL

Don't let the scale fool you into thinking *Ant-Man*'ll be cute. Cross' Yellowjacket will be a formidable foe. "He has a suit that is sort of the next generation Ant-Man suit," smiles Cross. "It's more badass, more militaristic, sleeker... sort of like if Apple had designed a battle suit." The actor also promises the tech will be put to good use in a bunch of 'cool' battles.

10 IT'S SHOOTING RIGHT NOW

"*Ant-Man* is finally coming out," enthuses Feige of the first film in Marvel's Phase 3. Given that Wright was working on the film since 2006, you can appreciate his relief when the film started shooting in mid-August. Firmly denying "the perception that the big evil studio was too scared at the outside-the-box creative vision", Feige is confident that "we're on the road to the best version of *Ant-Man* that we could have." TF

***Ant-Man* opens on 17 July 2015.**

© MARVEL

MARVEL'S PHASE 3 CONTINUED

ANT-MAN GETS THE BALL ROLLING ON THE NEXT STAGE OF THE CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

CAPTAIN AMERICA 3

With the Russo brothers returning to write and direct, don't expect Cap's political overtones to go anywhere in a hurry. "The character was invented for an explicitly political purpose. So it's hard to get away from that," says Anthony Russo. The sequel will be set a couple of years after *The Winter Soldier*.

ETA *May 2016*

DOCTOR STRANGE

Comic-Con audiences were denied a casting confirmation for the first cinematic foray into Marvel's supernatural side. "It's an amazing character study," enthuses Kevin Feige. "But it also is going to open up a whole other side of storytelling for our movies."

ETA *July 2016*

THOR 3

The first film on this list not to have a confirmed release date. How long can they make us wait to find out what the hell was actually going on with Loki at the end of *The Dark World*? Rumour has it that Craig Kyle and Christopher Yost are already thrashing out a script.

ETA *May 2017 (TBC)*

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY 2

Just before Part 1 hit cinemas, Marvel announced a *Guardians* sequel. James Gunn's already started work, telling fans, "The Guardians have so many hardships and heartaches and triumphs ahead of them, and I can't wait to share them with all of you."

ETA *July 2017*

AVENGERS 3

Concluding the third phase will likely be *Avengers 3*. "I presume we'd like to stick to three years between *Avengers* movies," says Feige. "So it will probably be three years between *Avengers 2* and *Avengers 3*." As he's sitting out Part 2, expect Thanos to finally make an *Avengers* appearance here.

ETA *2018 (TBC)*

>>

SEASON 1 SPOILERS!

SECRETS AND LIES

AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D. SEASON TWO'S BURNING QUESTIONS

WILL S.H.I.E.L.D. SURVIVE?

After HYDRA's high-level infiltration, S.H.I.E.L.D. is in tatters. Leading the comeback is Agent Phil Coulson (Clark Gregg), installed as the agency's new Director by Samuel L. Jackson's Nick Fury. Looks like he's going to have one hell of a job, though... "The monumental nature of that task is made very clear almost immediately," says Gregg. "Everyone wants to arrest us. S.H.I.E.L.D. is illegal."

WHAT'S UP WITH COULSON?

At the end of season one, we saw a mystified Coulson scrawling a bunch of cosmic symbols on a wall. You can bet that this is a delayed side effect of his post-*Avengers Assemble* resurrection thanks to wonder drug GH-325 – a serum derived from the blood of a mysterious blue alien. All signs point to the source being a Kree – the same race as *Guardians Of The Galaxy*'s Ronan The Accuser...

IS SKYE A SUPERHERO?

Not only was Coulson's newest recruit, computer hacker Skye (Chloe Bennet), pumped full of the same GH-325 serum, there were also suggestions that her classified origins held even more 'miraculous' potential. Adding weight to Skye's murky backstory in season two is guest star Kyle McLachlan, playing her father, aka 'The Doctor'. "[*This season*] is going to be about finding out who Skye is and where she comes from," says Bennet. "She's darker and a little bit more badass."

WHO'S THE NEW VILLAIN?

Joss Whedon regular Reed Diamond (*Dollhouse*, *Much Ado About Nothing*) is on board as season two's big bad, Daniel Whitehall, aka The Kraken – a HYDRA agent in possession of a technologically advanced helmet that makes its wearer near-indestructible. Then there's the possible return of season one baddie Graviton (*Harry Potter*'s Professor Quirrell, Ian Hart) and the continued (mis)adventures of ex-team member/HYDRA mole Grant Ward (Brett Dalton). "He's done some good things and some bad things," teases Dalton. "Season two will be figuring that out. I don't think he's the villain. He's an antihero." **RJ**

***Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* airs this autumn on Channel 4.**

DEFENDERS ASSEMBLE

NETFLIX JOINS THE MCU.

DAREDEVIL

No word on who Rosario Dawson will be playing in Netflix's 13-episode reboot, though we'd bet it's Electra. Charlie Cox and Vincent D'Onofrio will star as hero Matt Murdock and villain Kingpin.

JESSICA JONES

Superhero turned private eye Jones is slated to be the second plank of Netflix's ambitious Marvel roll-out. Melissa Rosenberg (*Dexter*) is on board as showrunner.

IRON FIST

The third show, based on the adventures of ace martial artist and chi-channeling hero Danny Rand, will also be shot in New York and focus on "the gritty world of Hell's Kitchen".

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FIRST LADY

HAYLEY ATWELL TALKS NEW MARVEL SPIN-OFF, AGENT CARTER.

Marvel is finally giving one of their female characters a lead role... albeit on the small screen, with new TV series *Agent Carter*. Hayley Atwell's Peggy Carter, first seen in *Captain America: The First Avenger*, will get an eight-episode, limited series that will focus on how the character helped launch S.H.I.E.L.D. as its co-director. "When we made the short [*the same-titled 'One Shot'*, Agent Carter] we had no idea it would turn into a TV show," writer Eric Pearson tells *TF*. "But after we showed it to Disney, they knew we had something special and a valuable asset with Hayley."

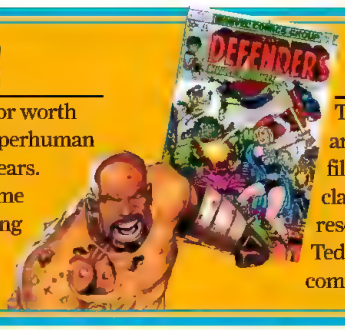
"We've seen her in many forms," says Atwell of Peggy, excited about getting to explore more facets of her onscreen alter ego. "We've seen her competent, strong and holding her own with the men. But there's a lot we haven't seen about her personal life and what it costs to be that way. So you won't just see her going on these exciting adventures, but you'll also see who she is as a human being."

With the series set in the late '40s, Atwell says Peggy is still deeply affected by the loss of Cap ("He's never far from her thoughts. She's grieving.") But as revealed in *The Winter Soldier*, Carter does move on – founding S.H.I.E.L.D. and becoming the original super-spy in the process. "It's not just a matter of filling in the gaps," Atwell promises. "How exciting we can make her life is a great tribute to the woman she ends up becoming." **TB**

***Agent Carter* airs later this year.**

LUKE CAGE

Every African-American actor worth his salt has been linked to superhuman 'Power Man' Luke over the years. Brit Idris Elba was in the frame back in the day, though playing Heimdall role in *Thor* may have nixed his chances.



THE DEFENDERS

The solo series will be followed by an *Avengers*-style blow-out to be filmed in NYC. "The Defenders are classic New York characters: smart, resourceful and tough," says Netflix's Ted Sarandos. "We're delighted they're coming to life on their home turf." **NS**

TEAM BUILDING

MEET THE MEMBERS OF DISNEY'S BIG HERO 6.

HIRO

Hiro (voiced by Ryan Potter) is a 14-year-old robotics prodigy who, haunted by his older bro's mysterious death, transforms nursebot Baymax into a formidable fighting machine. "The heart of the story is definitely Hiro and Baymax and the journey they go on together," says co-director Chris Williams.

BAYMAX

Baymax is a bulbous automated health provider that becomes an armour-plated hero-bot after a Hiro-administered upgrade. According to co-director Don Hall, "I wanted to do something original: a huggable robot."

GO GO TOMAGO

A bubblegum-chewing adrenaline junkie who uses magnetic levitation discs as wheels, shields and discus-like weapons, Go Go – voiced by Jamie Chung – is described by Hall as "a laconic Clint Eastwood type".

FRED

T.J. Miller (*How To Train Your Dragon*) lends his distinctive stoner tones to Fred, a "laid-back dude" with a ferocious alter-ego. "He can jump really high and he breathes fire," says Hall of the character's kaiju-style 'Fredzilla' suit.

HONEY LEMON

Chemistry student Honey is a brainiac who uses her knowledge of alchemy to create glowing potion balls. Hall says actress Genesis Rodriguez was a science geek herself at school and "brings some of that to the character".

WASABI

Neurotic sushi chef and martial arts ace Wasabi (Damon Wayans Jr) wields hi-tech plasma blades that make him a worthy adversary. "He learns to embrace the chaos of what being a superhero is all about," says Williams. **NS**

***Big Hero 6* opens on 13 February 2015.** >>

WORDS CALUM WADDELL

ROGUES GALLERY

DREW GODDARD'S SPIDER-MAN SPIN-OFF THE SINISTER SIX BRINGS TOGETHER SOME OF MARVEL'S MOST ICONIC MANIACS. MEET THE (POTENTIAL) MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-AVENGERS.

1 ELECTRO

Jamie Foxx's high-voltage anti-hero seemingly met his maker during *TASM2*'s climatic battle with Spider-Man, but if comics have taught us anything it's never to presume a villain dead. Electro was a member of the original Sinister Six line-up, so don't be surprised if he recharges for this spin-off

2 KRAVEN THE HUNTER

Sergei Kravinoff is a maniacal big-game hunter, preferring to take down his prey with his smarts and bare hands rather than advanced weaponry. He was originally recruited by Doc Ock under the promise of achieving his long-term goal: to take down Spider-Man and prove he's the world's greatest huntsman.

3 GREEN GOBLIN

He wasn't a member of the original Six in the comics, but the film universe's Harry Osborn (Dane DeHaan) – head of Oscorp and owner of the advanced tech that created Electro, Rhino and his own pointy-eared alter-ego in *TASM2* – is being positioned as the architect of the team.

4 SANDMAN

OK, this one might bring back some bad memories of Raimi's *Spider-Man 3*. But let's look at the positives: the big guy's creation scene was arguably one of that series' highlights, while there's plenty more potential to explore the backstory of the shapeshifting Flint Marko, who's been fighting Spidey in the comics since 1963.

5 DOCTOR OCTOPUS

One of Marvel's chief megalomaniacs, Doc Ock has been AWOL from the big screen since *Spider-Man 2* in 2004. In the comics, Dr Otto Octavius founded the Six after being defeated by ol'webhead three times in a row.

6 VULTURE

Sam Raimi was reportedly planning to debut Vulture in his own (abandoned) *Spider-Man 4*, though if *TASM2* is anything to go by we'll finally get to see ageing airborne evildoer Adrian Toomes onscreen – his winged flight harness was one of the easter eggs glimpsed in the Oscorp vaults.

7 MYSTERIO

One of Spider-Man's most esoteric adversaries, Mysterio is the alter-ego of stuntman Quentin Beck, who uses his special-effects genius to give him the edge. A regular member of the comics' Six, it'll be interesting to see if he makes Goddard's line-up.

8 RHINO

The alter-ego of dim-witted Russian gangster thug Aleksei Sytsevich. All brawn but little brains, he was depicted as a mechanical man-monster in the last Spidey outing but given minimal screentime. With Paul Giamatti underneath the costume, though, expect a lot more from Rhino in this film.

***The Sinister Six* opens in 2016.**

DARK SIDE

MORE SPIDEY VILLANY IN VENOM CARNAGE

Not content with scripting *The Amazing Spider-Man 3*, Alex Kurtzman is also set to write *and* direct the comeback vehicle for Eddie Brock and his alter-ego Venom. The 'Carnage' of the title also suggests there will be a role for Cletus Kasady, a serial killer who acquires the same goo that turns Brock bad. Looks like Sony are setting up this fan-favourite as an anti-hero... **NS**

***Venom Carnage* opens in 2017**

OUTSIDE THE LAW

A CELEBRATORY NEW DOC PROVES 2000AD HAS LIFE BEYOND JUDGE DREDD.

No-nonsense lawman Judge Dredd may be the most well-known character to emerge from British sci-fi comic-book *2000AD*, but he wasn't even in its first issue, printed in February 1977.

The eclectic title's pages have played host to characters like Strontium Dog, Halo Jones and Rogue Trooper, alongside all sorts of standalone tales. So with almost 40 years of history and nearly 2,000 issues' worth of story material, how can that all be condensed into one documentary? "Yeah, good question!" laughs Paul Stanton, director of *Future Shock! The Story Of 2000AD*. "Let's just say there are many hours of special features available."

He's already garnered an impressive list of interviews including *Dredd* developers Pat Mills and John Wagner, plus former writers like Neil Gaiman and Grant Morrison, and Stanton promises they're not done on that front: "We've been amazed by the amount of goodwill we have experienced during production – *2000AD* has had an impact on so many people's lives."

Despite having been a fan since childhood, he insists much was revealed about *2000AD* while making the film. "There were definitely some spicy times when it was suffering in the '90s, and the story of how the British creators changed American comic-books is remarkable." And it's highlighting the comic's impact beyond *Dredd* which interests Stanton most. "Everything from music and art to comic-book blockbuster movies... I want the debt that pop culture owes to *2000AD* to be acknowledged." **JA**

***Future Shock! The Story Of 2000AD* is screening at the BFI Science Fiction season in October.** >>

FOX NEWS

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES STAR MEGAN FOX TELLS TOTAL FILM ABOUT SUITING UP AS THE HALF-SHELL HEROES' JOURNO PAL, APRIL O'NEILL.

What attracted you to the role of April?
I was attracted to this because I was a fan as a kid, so I really campaigned to get this part. I was afraid at the same time because you don't want to ruin something that you loved and be a part of its downfall but I had to do it because it was iconic to me.

You're a fan of the Turtles – did you read the comics?
It was the movies mainly. I have an older sister so she was watching the movies when I was young. I saw *TMNT II: The Secret Of The Ooze* before I saw the first one because that came out when I was old enough to watch the VHS! Then I started watching the cartoon.

Who was your favourite?
Michelangelo, because he was the funny one. He was my first crush! Noel (Fisher), the actor that plays him, is really talented. He steals the movie!

They have a bit of a different look in this movie...
They're enormous. I wouldn't say unfriendly looking, but they're meant to be slightly grotesque looking because they are mutated turtles and we're trying to make them realistic. So it's frightening at first.

Was it a challenging shoot?
It was a little tough at times because two weeks into shooting I discovered I was pregnant. That made it a lot harder to do all the physical scenes when I would rather have been curled up in bed! [*Laughs*] But there was such a good atmosphere on the set that it made things a lot easier for me.

Does April get any good fight scenes in the film?
Unfortunately, my best kick-ass scene was cut because it seemed out of place for April, this skinny journalist, to suddenly turn into this martial arts expert and start beating up people!

You've also reconciled with (exec producer) Michael Bay after your post-*Transformers* fall out...
I'm so glad Michael and I are collaborating again. We're both strong personalities and we've had some differences but I've always felt love and admiration for him. It meant a lot to me to work with him again. **RJa**

***Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* opens on 17 October.**

"THERE WAS SUCH A GOOD ATMOSPHERE ON SET. IT MADE THINGS EASIER FOR ME"

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FAMILY AFFAIR

THE FANTASTIC FOUR RETURN. REED ALL ABOUT IT...

Details about Fox's *Fantastic Four* reboot have been few and far between, but this latest go at Marvel's family of astronauts-cum-superheroes will be darker, and hopefully more fantastic, than Tim Story's mid-'00s efforts. *Chronicle*'s Josh Trank directs Miles Teller as Mr Fantastic, Kate Mara as the Invisible Woman, Michael B. Jordan as The Human Torch and Jamie Bell as The Thing, facing off against Toby Kebbell's Dr Doom. "We aren't superheroes," says Jordan. "We're kids that had an accident and we have disabilities that to cope with." There's great confidence in Trank, too: a sequel's already been fast-tracked for 2017. **JA**

***The Fantastic Four* opens in June 2015.**

NEED TO READ

FANTASTIC FOUR OMNIBUS VOL 1

1961-1964

There's no better introduction to the *FF* than Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's genre-changing original run on the title. Huge sci-fi concepts meet meet superhero soap. Awesome.

FANTASTIC FOUR OMNIBUS VOL 2

1964-1967

Vol 2 continues reprinting those early issues, which include the first appearance of Galactus in issues 48-50. Comics have rarely matched early *FF* in terms of quality. **DG**

WORLD'S END

A FORMIDABLE NEW NEMESIS POWERS X-MEN: APOCALYPSE...

"More powerful than Magneto." That's how writer Simon Kinberg describes the titular baddie in the next X-adventure, a character he describes as "the most powerful of any mutant villain we've seen so far." Good news for a series that reached an all-time high with *Days Of Future Past*, and now seems to have set its sights even higher.

Apocalypse will take place in the 1980s with the *First Class* cast mostly taking over from the original players. Yet not everything's new, with *X2* scribes Michael Dougherty and Dan Harris sharing script duties alongside Kinberg and Bryan Singer directing. The latter took to Instagram in June to offer a sneak peek of the script's first page, which opens with the Nile ablaze and the Four Horsemen riding into a battle of thousands. Who would've thought the end times would be so exciting? **NS**

***X-Men: Apocalypse* opens on 19 May 2016.**

MUTANT MADNESS

MORE X-MOVIES COMING YOUR WAY...

GAMBIT

Channing Tatum's prospective appearance in *Apocalypse* will pave the way for a solo outing as mutant Cajun cardsharp Remy LeBeau, described by the star as "a *character* character". **ETA** *TBC*

WOLVERINE 3

Fox has a director (James Mangold) and a writer (David James Kelly) lined up for Wolvie's next outing and might shoot it back-to-back with *Apocalypse* next year. That makes sense to Hugh Jackman, who knows how hard it can be to get himself in shape... "Once you're there it's easier to maintain it," he says. **ETA** *2017*

X-FORCE

This mutant mash-up – marking Deadpool's eagerly-awaited return – seemed to be on track thanks to a screenplay from *Kiss-Ass 2* director Jeff Wadlow. But comic creator Rob Liefeld says that "everything changed" after *Apocalypse* got the go-ahead, meaning *X-Force* could be on the back-burner for now. **ETA** *TBC* TF

BREAKING BAD

From Adventureland to Zombieland, The Social Network and The Double to new thriller Night Moves... **Jesse Eisenberg** has long done ace work in ace films. But now he's hitting the big (justice) leagues playing arch villain Lex Luthor in Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice...

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

It's 9.30am on a scorching day in early August and *Total Film* has just sat down outside a coffee shop on Portabello Road when Jesse Eisenberg ambles into view wearing trainers, tan slacks, grey t-shirt and a beaten cap from which his signature curly hair sprouts in all directions. He's living in Notting Hill while his girlfriend, Mia Wasikowska, reprises her lead role in Disney's *Alice In Wonderland* sequel *Through The Looking Glass*, and is taking advantage of the long hours spent in an empty flat to write his latest play before welcoming her home each day like a devoted househusband.

Removing his iPhone earplugs he sits down and fires questions at us for a good 10 minutes ("Where did you grow up? What was your school like? What movies do you like? Do you think American movies are dumb?") before ducking inside and emerging with mugs of tea and a plate of toasted teacakes smothered in jam and cream. "I'm going to get citizenship after this meal," he smiles, then carefully takes a bite and sucks at his fingertips.

Eisenberg has agreed to meet up to discuss his quietly impressive work in Kelly Reichardt's eco-terrorism thriller *Night Moves*, and his dual performance in Richard Ayoade's *The Double*. But like many of his characters, he's pin-sharp and knows well enough that it's only a matter of time until the conversation turns to a little Zack Synder movie entitled *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, in which, of course, he plays one of the most iconic villains in comic books: Lex Luthor. Politely explaining he's not allowed to say anything other than "I'm not allowed to say anything" – his humour is dry, never culminating with an exclamation mark – he nods to the suggestion that the subject might at least be danced around without inviting sniper bullets from Warner Bros.

The 30-year-old actor does not read comics and has not seen any comic-book movies – when told about Heath Ledger's incendiary reinvention of the most famous comic-book villain of all, the Joker, and how it plugs into modern-day fears of terrorism, he replies, "Oh, that's interesting, really interesting," before asking if Michael Keaton's Batman also boasted such psychological depth. But before fans rise up thinking Eisenberg has no love or understanding of the genre, and that he's perhaps playing Luthor to appear in a tent-pole release as part of some overarching career plan, it should be noted that he takes the role extremely seriously. Once cast, he waded through a stack of comics and watched "that movie with Gene Hackman in it." >>

"My father always cautions me against thinking of something as a means to some other end, because then it's irresponsible to the 'means' thing," he says, putting down his teacake. "They asked me if I wanted to play the part before they sent me the script..." He pauses, selects his words carefully. "I'm not sure how it worked, but it's something I read with the understanding that I *could* do the role, if I ..." He plucks at his cap. "You know, they don't just hand the scripts out. But I really liked it on its own terms. I would do it if it was for free and it was tiny."

More on Lex later. For now, Eisenberg is itching to chat *Night Moves*, an atmospheric, shadow-cloaked thriller in which three environmental activists (Eisenberg, Dakota Fanning, Peter Sarsgaard) plan to blow up a hydroelectric dam in the forests of Oregon. Written and directed by Kelly Reichardt (*Wendy And Lucy*, *Meek's Cutoff*), it moves deliberately and implacably, favouring character complexity and roiling suspense over kinetic thrills. Eisenberg's Josh is a closed-mouthed protagonist whose beliefs and motivations reveal themselves slowly, without recourse to exposition.

"There are fewer lines to learn," he jokes, asked if it's harder to play an interior role than the socially awkward yet often fast-talking, overtly intelligent characters he usually takes on. "This character felt real. He doesn't speak because he doesn't know what to say. He feels overwhelmed with uncomfortable rage and irritation and disgust so he keeps everything inside."

Eisenberg prepared for the role by living on a self-sufficient farm for a little over a week, pitching in with the daily chores and having no access to technology or the outside world. The quietude and enforced reconnection with nature fed into his performance ("You end up speaking slower, and you look up as you walk around as opposed to looking at the ground, as you do in New York"), and he also found Reichardt's working methods liberating.

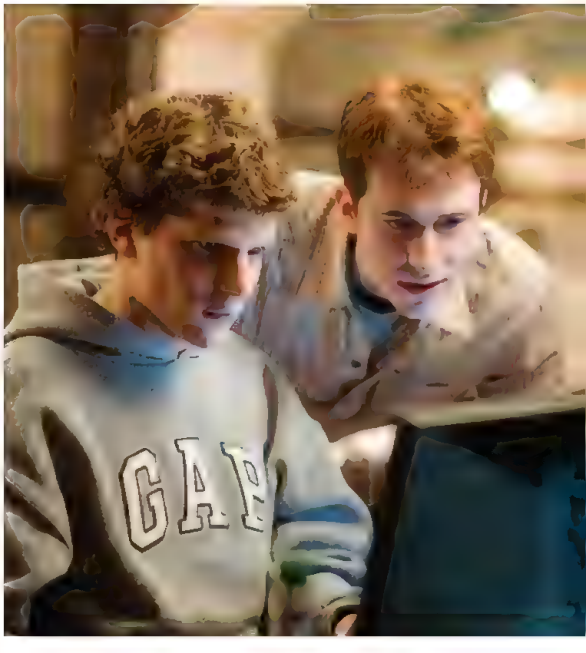
"She allows actors to live in the monotony of the scenes," he explains. "If the scene is working on the farm, they'd film for a long period of time and then she'd use only a bit of that." Not that making *Night Moves* was without its challenges. "The irony is, when you do a movie like this, which focuses on character, and subtlety of interaction, and nuance of performance, the schedule only allows for a few takes, whereas doing a bigger movie that is action-orientated or flashy or shiny and that doesn't highlight the specificity of an actor's performance, you get several hours to do one moment of a scene and try it 100 different ways."

On *The Double*, in which Eisenberg plays an anxious office drone whose life turns especially nightmarish when his confident, charismatic doppelganger (Eisenberg also) arrives at the firm to showcase his inadequacies, he got to do as many takes as he wished. Like Eisenberg, writer/director Ayoade is a perfectionist.

Faces of Jesse: (above) with Mia Wasikowska in *The Double* (2013); (below) with Joseph Mazzello in *The Social Network* (2010).

"I love any opportunity to do more," he says. "When I do plays, it takes me a year to write them, a year or two to find a theatre to do the play, and then you perform it 80 times, and I still feel I have a lot of things to explore. Movies are really strange because oftentimes you'll have two or three takes to do something you've been thinking about for months. You don't have an opportunity to swing the bat."

So doing 99 takes for David Fincher on Mark Zuckerberg biopic *The Social Network* to nail that opening break-up scene, shot without cuts and featuring eight pages' worth of machine-gun dialogue from the furious pen of Aaron Sorkin, wasn't a problem? "No, not really. A 10-minute scene would be the shortest scene in a play. It's much more difficult to work up any reality when you're on set drinking coffee and then you're supposed to get into some histrionic place for half a second in front of a green wall."



Born in Queens, New York, in 1983, Eisenberg was raised with his two sisters in a secular Jewish family by his mother Amy, a professional clown, and father Barry, a college professor. He didn't enjoy school and started performing in children's theatre aged 10, preferring a world where there wasn't a "prescribed way of behaving".

Eisenberg appeared in off-Broadway plays in the mid '90s before making his screen debut in TV series *Get Real* from 1999 to 2000 and turning heads in 2002's prattle-of-the-sexes comedy-drama *Roger Dodger*, his feature film bow. Impressive turns in movies such as M. Night Shyamalan's *The Village* (2004), Noah Baumbach's *The Squid And The Whale* (2005), Greg Mottola's *Adventureland* (2009), Ruben Fleischer's *Zombieland* (2009), Fincher's *The Social Network* (for which he received a Best Actor Oscar nomination) and Woody Allen's *To Rome With Love* (2012) followed. But now his career is set to skyrocket – because of *Batman V Superman*, naturally, but also because he's reteaming with *Adventureland* co-star Kristen Stewart in action-comedy *American Ultra*.

Eisenberg speaks even faster than normal, his excitement palpable. "I did months of fight training beforehand, I liked doing it," he says. "We finished shooting a month ago and it's very unusual. It begins with a similar tone to *Adventureland* and then becomes undermined by this very other storyline. We play this young couple who are in this quiet rural area of West Virginia who are both stoners, and then this woman from the CIA comes into this grocery store where I work and tells me that there's this

FABRIZIO MALTESE/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES

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Green cause: with co-star Dakota Fanning in *Night Moves*.

'I REALISE HOW POPULAR COMIC-BOOK MOVIES ARE, AND NOW, WORKING ON ONE, I REALISE WHY'

government program that's out to kill me – I've now been activated to defend myself. Kristen's my girlfriend and we have to go on the run together. She's a great actress. She has this low tolerance for her own inauthenticity and will stop takes in the middle if she doesn't feel she's being real."

Stewart knows all about meteoric levels of fame. So how does Eisenberg feel about the stone-cold fact that, once his Lex Luthor is in cinemas, it will be quite impossible for him to sit in the street while casually munching a teacake? "I've been in things that have been popular before," he shrugs. "To say, 'I can't do *that* which will appear in thousands of theatres on opening day, but I can do *this* which will appear in this amount of theatres... It's arbitrary. I realise how popular comic-book movies are, and now, working on one, I realise why they're popular – the story is really good, the dialogue is really good, the artistry behind every department is high, the acting is really good. So if they're all put together with that level of quality..."

The interesting thing about Luthor, arch enemy of Superman, is that he can be played so many ways. First appearing in *Action Comics #43* (April 1940), he's a middle-aged, highly intelligent business magnate with immense riches and technical prowess, but has since been reimagined as an industrialist and an aspiring scientist and a corporate executive – usually bald, sometimes with a shock of red hair, and at times kitted out in exosuits to match the powers of Superman. Luthor's origin story has been reinvented many times over and he's appeared in several live-action and animated TV shows as well as having been portrayed, on film, by two Oscar-winning actors in Gene Hackman and Kevin Spacey. Presumably Eisenberg's goal is to offer a curveball take and give us a Luthor to rival Ledger's Joker (even if he hasn't seen it). Naturally he can't divulge, but dangles a couple of interesting hints.

"There are some indications of how the character should behave based on the script, and then an actor makes it his or her own," he says. "I got to know one of the writers really well, Chris Terrio, and we were able to discuss things at length and figure out who this person is to create a real psychology behind what is, perhaps, in a comic book, a less than totally modern psychology. I can only say I've been asked to play an interesting role: a complicated, challenging person."

And with that he's gone, the earplugs back in, the cap pulled down tight and that shock of curly hair disappearing down the street. TF

***The Double* is out now on Blu-ray and DVD. *Night Moves* opens on 29 August. *American Ultra* opens next year. *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* opens on 25 March 2016.**

Teenagers plunged into a nightmarish labyrinth are forced to grow up fast in the first male-orientated YA sci-fi. Total Film ventures on set of The Maze Runner to uncover a futuristic Lord Of The Flies...

WORDS **ROSIE FLETCHER**

LOST BOYS

"Wear long pants. We will see spiders and snakes." The alarming missive *Total Film* receives from the unit publicist as we prepare to embark on a night shoot for dystopian YA sci-fi *The Maze Runner*. It's early June 2013 and the heat is beyond oppressive even in the dusk of the early evening as we travel from New Orleans towards Baton Rouge past the vast waterlogged bayou to the 'Glade' – the centre of a giant maze, where the action takes place. It's day 15 of a 40-day shoot and so far, we're told, the production's snake wrangler has caught more than 25 venomous serpents on set already. Instead of lanyards and note pads, we're handed bottles of industrial strength insect repellent and instructed to bathe ourselves liberally. The Glade is huge. It takes up around 18 acres of a farm which is 2,000 acres in total. As we enter the main arena there's a group of muddy teenage boys throwing a frisbee about and eyeing us suspiciously. When we come closer we realise it's the cast, who switch quickly to professional and slightly sheepish greetings when they're told who we are. We'll catch up with them later but for now, as we wait for the darkness to fully descend and the night shoot to begin, it's time to explore the strange, post-apocalyptic world of *The Maze Runner*.

Based on the first of a series of young adult novels by James Dashner, *The Maze Runner* begins when Thomas (*Teen Wolf*'s Dylan O'Brien) wakes up in the middle of a maze with 150ft walls which open every day and shift around every night.

"He arrives in this world and he doesn't know who he is, where he comes from, and who put him there," explains producer Wyck >>

Godfrey as he begins to show us around, serenaded by the croak of bullfrogs so loud they sound like angry ducks. "He meets these guys who seem to have been living here for a long time, and all they know is that out there is the maze and they haven't been able to find a way out." The eldest of the inhabitants – still young adults themselves – have been here for three years and in that time built a commune-like settlement. As we wander deeper into the Glade, an open field surrounded on one side by woodland and on the other by blue screen walls that will become the doors of the maze, we see huts built from sticks and straw where the tribe (that's what these boys become) meet and sleep and live. There's a real corn field grown from scratch. We see the animal pens, which house real pigs and chickens. The council hall, the lookout tree and the entrance to the lift – covered with tarpaulin right now – where Thomas and the others are delivered into the maze on their first day.

"It's like a sci-fi *Lord Of The Flies*." Godfrey explains, and that's entirely the vibe we get. An isolated world of youthful testosterone, a hint of anarchic joy with the threat of violence ready to erupt at any moment.

Tonight tensions are high. The night before, the boys of the Glade had built a giant wooden effigy of a 'griever' – one of the creatures that inhabit the world of *The Maze Runner* (more on this later) – and burnt it to the ground in ritualistic celebration. Tonight they'll film the quiet aftermath of Thomas' first day, the rising fractiousness between factions and our first glimpse of what the hell is even going on in this odd, half idyllic/half horrific universe.

"This is the first 10 minutes of the movie where we get to have fun – it's all playtime," grins director Wes Ball, wandering over to join Godfrey to chat with us. "And it's going to turn really dark, really fast."

Ball is 32 but he looks considerably younger. It wouldn't be too much of a stretch to imagine him caked in mud, hurling around a frisbee with the rest of the boys. But Wes Ball is not to be underestimated. Though *The Maze Runner* is his first feature as director, his calling card is impressive. Ten years experience in VFX, his own small Visual Effects house (named Oddball Animation after his mother Audrey – 'Aud' Ball) and his highly impressive eight and a half minute post-apocalyptic short *Ruin* led him here, via a vibrant pitch to Fox. "I had all this artwork I had worked up myself. It's my background. I pitched my heart out." He recalls.

Later we're given a glimpse of some concept art and it's incredible. Green and grey puzzle box walls, different levels and sections within the maze. Some have concrete floors, others have waterlogged areas, others sections are adorned with thick vines draped across the vast labyrinth. Then there's the some of the threats held within the maze – the 'grievers' – bio-mechanical monstrosities hinted at and glimpsed only briefly in the trailer. Any more on what we saw would push us into spoiler territory, suffice it to say it looked terrifying. If Ball can make the film look like what's in his head, it's going to be spectacular.

No way out: The Gladers prepare to enter the maze and (opposite) Will Poulter as Gally.

THE FIRST 10 MINUTES IS PLAYTIME. BUT IT'S GOING TO TURN REALLY DARK, REALLY FAST... **WES BALL**

It's dark now, and the Glade is filled with strange animal and insect noises as we make our way to *The Maze Runner*'s equivalent of a press room. It's a mosquito tent – a gazebo surrounded by fine netting with chairs, fans and a small flatscreen monitor inside. We're given headsets where we can hear drums and chanting as the action begins. The bonfire – the focus of the previous night's scenes – is now in the background, with the Gladers crouching around. In the foreground, Thomas (O'Brien) in a green shirt and trousers. Chuck (Blake Cooper), the youngster of the gang at around 12 years old, wearing a brown tank top and khaki shorts, approaches and tells him about vicious, flying creatures called 'beetleblades'. Then Newt (Thomas Brodie-Sangster, once best know as the kid from *Love Actually*, now *Game Of Thrones*' Jojen Reed) comes over and gives Thomas some Glade-made moonshine and with it a bit of exposition: how for years 'maze runners', the quickest of the tribe, have searched the maze by day, trying to map its structure but that so far they haven't found a way out; and about the grievers: "No one's ever seen one and lived to tell the tale". In the background we see Gally (fellow Brit actor Will Poulter), milling around looking tougher and taller than the rest; close by Fry Pan (Dexter Darden) – the gang's resident chef – standing

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over a makeshift bar fashioned from two oil drums and a wooden plank.

While Ball calls for another take, it's time for us to meet the first of the ensemble cast. And it's a girl. Dressed in denim cut-offs and an off the shoulder dirty white top, British *Skins* alum Kaya Scodelario ducks into the tent with a grin.

"I'm very much a city girl. All these noises, I can't deal with them! 'What is that? Why is that making that noise?' It freaks me out." She laughs, sympathetic as a kamikaze moth as big her fist, lodges itself in *TF*'s hair. "But my best friends are all boys, so I'm used to roughing it." Just as well. *The Maze Runner* is a man's world and Teresa, Scodelario's character, is thrown into the middle of it generating suspicion and further conflict among the gang. "It isn't a love triangle or anything like that." She's quick to reassure us. "I just loved the concept of not knowing what was going on. It felt like a thriller, very intelligent. It totally captured my imagination. I said to Wes, 'I want to kick butt. Don't make me the female that doesn't do anything. I want to fight and I want to lead and all the rest of it!'" She's very boysy in person and proud of her heritage ("I was raised in England, but I was raised solely by my [*Brazilian*] mother, so my culture is very much Brazilian," she explains) saying she misses "Fry-ups. English breakfast. Football. EastEnders," and promising her US cast mates that if they come to visit her in London she'll "take them out in Camden and get them twatted." She won't be alone – all well as Poulter and Brodie-Sangster she's joined by fellow Brit Aml Ameen (who starred alongside Scodelario in urban sci-fi *Shank* in 2010, as well as Lee Daniels' *The Butler* last year) who plays good hearted leader Alby. There's something fittingly earthy about this cast that should make them relatable for a whole new audience. Afterall, Godfrey and Ball are positioning this as the first male YA franchise.

"It feels like everything is a girl protagonist, where it's Bella or Tris or Katniss. It always seems to be female protagonists. This has more in common with *Ender's Game* than *Divergent* or *The Hunger Games*. But I call that science fiction. I don't even think of that as YA." Godfrey ponders, "I think there are similar themes in all of these books, which are: adults aren't there to help you or protect you. The adults are bad and have designed a world that is brutal and you have to make your own way."

MEET THE GLADERS

THE MUDDY TEENS WHO MIGHT BE HUMANITY'S BEST HOPE

THOMAS (DYLAN O'BRIEN)

GALLY (WILL POULTER)

TERESA (KAYA SCODELARIO)

ALBY (AML AMEEN)

FRY PAN (DEXTER DARDEN)

NEWT (THOMAS BRODIE-SANGSTER)

Higher perspective: Teresa (Kaya Scodelario) and Thomas (Dylan O'Brien) climb the lookout tree.

HE DOESN'T THINK OF HIMSELF AS THE HERO. IT ALL BECOMES INSTINCT

DYLAN O'BRIEN

Ball agrees, saying he's going for a PG-13 rating, though viewers shouldn't underestimate the threats of the maze. "A lot of our drama is not in-your-face grotesque stuff. It's just intense." He says. "I think you're going to be safe. We're going to get all the 13-year-olds, and I'm making it cool enough for my group too."

When he's finished his scene and O'Brien joins us in our make shift interview room he's full of beans, despite the late night and the insect assault. He's charming and friendly – not pasty and troubled like Edward Cullen nor precocious and pragmatic like Ender – though he's trying hard to style out the insect interference. While we chat, a large unidentified bug lands on his shorts and begins to climb up. He barely reacts until it starts to venture under his belt at which point he omits a controlled (and very manly) 'Wah!'

"Thomas is way on the reserved side. It's just such a different story and different character," O'Brien explains. "But all of these characters – especially mine – start at a reset point. He doesn't know who he is or who he was before. It's like he's discovering who he is. But he can change it now – who he was before doesn't matter at all, and now he's a curious human in this crazy, dangerous environment. He just wants to figure out how to get out. It all becomes instinct. He is, as a person, smart and heroic in a quiet sense. He doesn't want to be the hero, and he doesn't think of himself as the hero. But he just knows no other way than to want to save everybody and himself." Thomas is the ears and eyes of the audience – thrown into the middle of something we, nor he, fully understands, left to piece it together through interaction with the Gladers and by exploring his new home. O'Brien's arrival on set even mirrored Thomas' – though it was far from the in-fighting and stress of the Glade.

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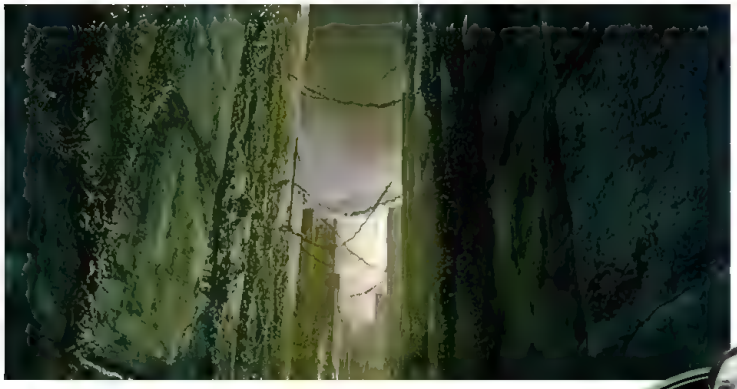
Boys club: Thomas Brodie-Sangster, O'Brien, Scodelario, Ki Hong Lee, Dexter Darden and Alexander Flores face the darkness, (below, left) Wes Ball's maze and (below, right) Minho (Lee) and Gally (Poulter) lead the gang into danger.



"The rest of the cast had landed. I was a couple of days late – and when I got here, I went straight to the production office. I had a full day of pre-production stuff. When I got back to the hotel all the guys were already there. They texted me and were like, 'Hey, we're up in Will's room, cooking. Come up.' That happened every night the rest of pre-production week. We got together in a room. Everybody would cook a meal. They'd go out and buy stuff and cook for each other. I don't think you see that ever with a cast."

The cast all speak of the family atmosphere and the unusual playfulness the experience has afforded them – like some bizarre summer camp where they all get filthy and fight monsters together. Not least Will Poulter. Though on set he carries a hint of schoolyard menace, even in his vaguely intimidating get-up — shorts, vest, brown armband — Poulter is clearly a lovely guy. Familiar to Brit audiences from *Son Of Rambow* and *Wild Bill*, and more recently getting his nads bitten by a spider in *We Are The Millers*, the actor, 20 at the time of our visit, has shot up to an imposing 6'3" (Poulter says his nickname is "Baby Giraffe" because he's not yet used to his height). In the Glade he's playing more to his physique than his temperament. "Gally's a fairly imposing kind of character. He's a physical threat. He's an authoritarian, definitely. He's a bit of a brute, in some ways," Poulter explains. "Which is funny because I'm the opposite. If a fight breaks out, I'm sort of the guy trying to pay his bill and leave." Inside the Glade he's a force to be reckoned with – Jack to Thomas' Ralph to extend the *Lord Of The Flies* reference. Gentle and honest, Poulter's an actor on the rise; since shooting he's won a BAFTA as well as a part opposite Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hardy in Alejandro González Iñárritu's *The Revenant*. Indeed, Ball is confident *The Maze Runner* will be a young talent showcase for all his cast.

"I think we have an *American Graffiti* or *Taps*. Any of those movies where you're going to look back and see all these stars. It's mind-blowing. These guys are such good actors."

An ensemble *Memento* for teens? *The Hunger Games* for boys? *Lost* via *Lord Of The Flies*? Or the chance for a whole lot of talented up and comers (Wes Ball included) to show what they can do? *The Maze Runner* seems imbued with a youthful ambition that fits its subject matter perfectly.

"It was supposed to be a small little movie, but it's turned out to be pretty big in scope," producer Wyck Godrey muses as he looks around the set. It's the early hours of the morning now and as the first hints of dawn turn the skyline from black to dark blue and we track back to the van nodding our thanks to the snake wrangler as we go, we couldn't agree more. It's a brave new world. TF

ON-SET SPY

The Brit cast were grumpy because they couldn't find a pub to watch the England vs Brazil football match the night before our visit.

***The Maze Runner* opens on 10 October.**

WORDS **MATT RISLEY** PORTRAIT **EMILY SHUR**

'I'd DIE to play Catwoman...'

She's best known as sarcastic, cynical, anti-manic-pixie-girl April Ludgate in TV's Parks And Recreation, but **Aubrey Plaza** is ready to break out of her well-worn image. She tells Total Film about new zomromcom Life After Beth, typecasting and superhero ambitions.

Aubrey Plaza is not who you think she is. For years she's coasted the crest of a super-cynical wave powered by a string of hyper-sarcastic, disaffected and perpetually funny performances in some of TV and moviedom's biggest pop culture hits (the multi award-winning sitcom *Parks And Recreation* and cult favourite *Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World*, for starters). But while she's stolen more than her fair share of scenes as a supporting actress and comedienne, an intriguing forthcoming slate boasting roles among Hollywood A-listers as well as edgy indies, including a lead zomromcom and Sundance Festival breakout *Life After Beth*, suggests that the 30-year-old is ready for a new challenge. The first of which, it seems, is overcoming said stereotype and a never-ending slew of people asking the same typecasting question. How similar in person is she to the roles that have defined her on-screen? Or is that, we posit, by now the world's most boring question?

"It *is* the most boring question in the world," she laughs so drily that you can practically hear the thud of the eye-roll. "I am very sarcastic, yes, but I would not say that I'm disaffected. Because *Funny People*, *Parks And Recreation* and *Scott Pilgrim* were the first three things that I ever did, it's very natural for people to assume, "Oh, that must be what she's like in real life. I'm similar, always, to any character that I play because I must use even a part of myself to bring that character alive. But on a day-to-day basis, I think people would be very surprised to interact with me and see me emote feelings. It's easy for me to go to the dark zone of 'Whatever. I don't know'. It's a safe place for me."

While she boasts a feisty and acerbic wit, she's far from the macabre sociopath you may be expecting and/or hoping for. It's a softening of the edges that's being seen on-screen too, with *Life After Beth* the perfect performance bridge, >>

gifting Plaza a role that allows her to mix it up as both a sweet, hopelessly romantic girl next door, and a limb-ripping, brain-munching zombie psycho. Though the zomedy subgenre is hardly new – *Shaun Of The Dead*, *Warm Bodies* and *Zombieland* have cornered the market somewhat, Plaza insists *Life After Beth* isn't riding on their coattails.

"It was written before all of those zombie comedies started popping up," Plaza explains. "It was before its time, but unfortunately it took a long time to get going. It's really different [*to other zomromcoms*] because it's more of a drama than you would expect. It's really more about relationships... it's like a metaphor for a break-up, and the zombie element is a little bit on the periphery."

Like all great zombie movies, *Life After Beth* is as concerned with metaphors as it is with maulings and munchings, and first-time director (and Plaza's current beau) Jeff Baena's script explores the all-too-relatable issues of the romanticisation of past relationships and the inevitable emotional implosion when you return to a love that's deteriorated beyond salvation. As the girlfriend who went missing, died and has now mysteriously returned from beyond the grave, Plaza struggles to hold on to her humanity and her boyfriend (Dane DeHaan) as a zombie epidemic overcomes not only herself, but the world. It's a drama-comedy set-up that leads to some darkly laugh-out-loud moments, not least some rather spectacular stunt work. "I really loved the physical stuff I got to do. I didn't do every single stunt, but I did a lot of the stuff myself... hopefully someday I'll be able to do [*all of it*]," she enthuses.

Girl power: [illegible] with co-star [illegible] in *Life After Beth*; (far top right) with co-star Retta in *Parks And Recreation*; (far bottom right) *Safety Not Guaranteed* (2012)

Stunt work and romantic leading roles are a long way from her career and personal beginnings. Born in Wilmington, Delaware in 1984, Plaza was the oldest of three siblings raised by her attorney mother and financial advisor father. A successful stint at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts was briefly derailed after she suffered a stroke back in 2004. Thankfully, she fully recovered and threw herself into the local arts scene. A brief sojourn as an intern at a Post-Its company later (highlight: "literally wallpapering a bathroom with Post-Its"), she began a stint performing improv and sketch comedy at New York's infamous Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. This led to a couple of short movies, a role as Seth Rogen's love interest in *Funny People*, and then her mainstream break as the nihilistic, deadpan government employee April Ludgate in *Parks And Recreation*. It was not exactly a career path she had planned.

"I didn't expect to be on television, ever. Or be on a show that's lasted this long. I am still appreciative that people even like the show," she bashfully admits before revealing she's equally as gobsmacked at her character's cult following. "I didn't expect that. [*That people*] like the characters, I just love that so much. I'm so lucky to be on it."

'Fame doesn't appeal to me, but working and being a successful actor does'

Now entering its seventh and final year, the show has snaffled awards aplenty (Emmy noms, Golden Globe wins, *Time*'s 2012 TV show of the year, and many more) and deservedly so, with a curveball humour that's matured along with its A-List comedy ensemble cast. Yet while show lead Amy Poehler has cemented her place amongst Hollywood's comedy elite, and on-screen husband Chris Pratt has gone interstellar in Marvel's *Guardians Of The Galaxy* and is soon to be taking over the (*Jurassic*) world, Plaza is surprisingly honest and emotionally fragile when it comes to the thought of leaving her sitcom safety net behind. "It's terrifying. It's been my home base for seven years and changed my life. I am so not ready to have it be over. I wish it could go on forever. It's been such a joyful experience. I just don't even want to think about it being over," she admits, before going on to sing the praises of Hollywood's new favourite leading man.

"I think that [*Chris*] is so ridiculously talented and likeable and just such a good guy. He really deserves everything he's getting right now. If I had to pick one person who was going to be famous and be everywhere and shoved down everyone's throats, I would pick him," she laughs. But is box-office mega-fame something she's actively courting, or is she happy to stick to an indie path? "For me, I don't know. Fame doesn't appeal to me, but working and being a successful actor appeals to me. If fame is the price to pay, then I'll take it. But it's not something I think about."

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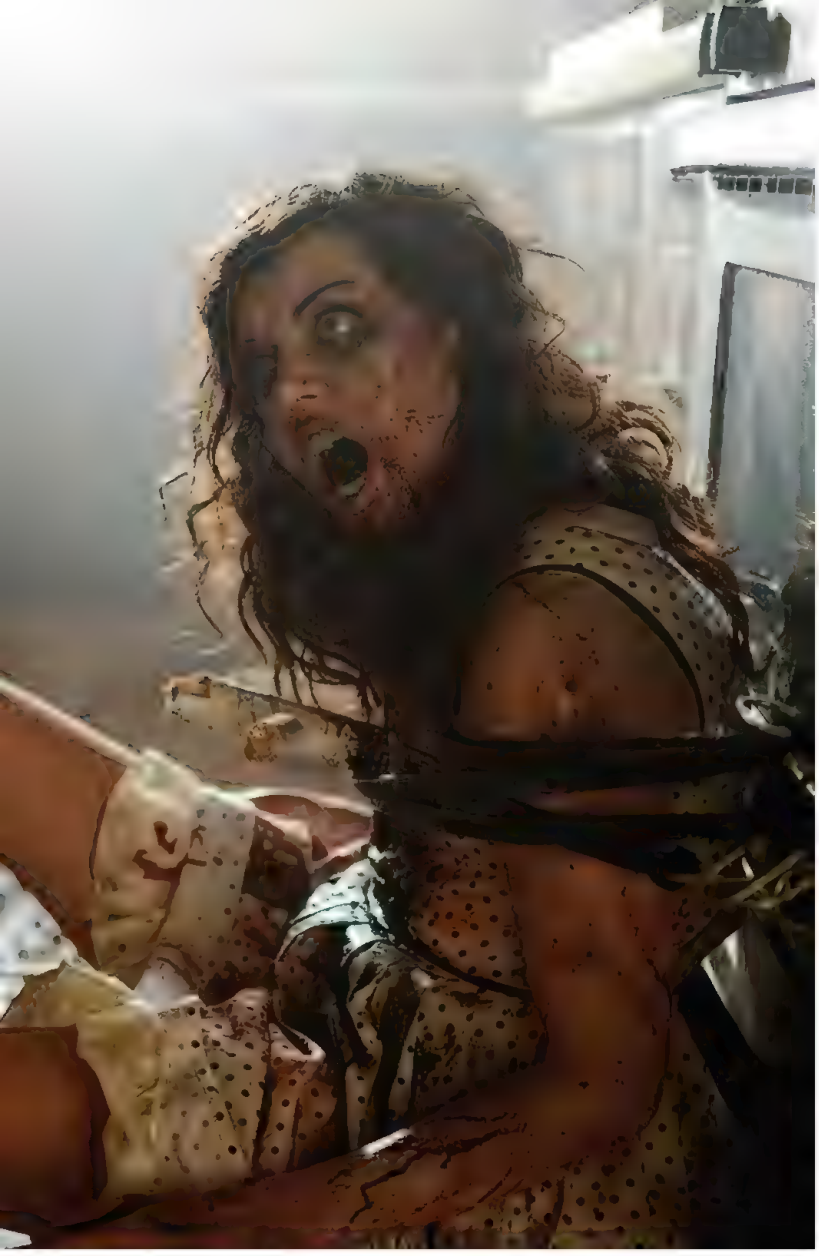

EMILY SHUR/CORBIS OUTLINE

While she boasts a CV already ratcheting up horror (*Life After Beth*), sci-fi (*Safety Not Guaranteed*) and comic-book movies (*Scott Pilgrim*), she denies she's a genre queen in waiting. A fact swiftly sidetracked when we get chatting about Pratt's ascension to the superhero leagues, and a little rumour we'd heard about her wanting to play Catwoman. "I would fucking die to do something like that," she says excitedly after we float the idea of her playing the Cat to Ben Affleck's Bat. "There's something so sexy and badass about Catwoman. I just think it's the ultimate female role. You get to be a woman, but you also [*get to*] destroy people, and use all your female energy for evil. I just kind of love that."

So what *does* the future hold? While *The To Do List* was a slight leading lady sophomore slump, it suggested a conscious broadening of her appeal, and a further willingness to take centre stage after the critical success of *Safety Not Guaranteed*. "I loved that movie so much, and it just taught me so much. Being the lead of a movie is such a weird job. If you're just a small part of a movie, you don't really get to see something from the very beginning to the very end, and there's something really beautiful about watching that process," she reveals. "It reminded me of being in film school and doing community theatre."

With a theatre background, a creatively liberated, improv-friendly culture on-set of *Parks And Recreation*, and a string of real world pranks, there's the question of just how much Plaza is willing to conform, and how much creative wiggle room she needs on a project to thrive.

"I think it's funny, as I really go back and forth on that. There was a period of my life where I was really drawn to [*doing*] things where I can go off the cuff and be outrageous. But actually, right now, I'm really drawn to being constrained. I've just done a Hal Hartley movie (*Ned Rifle*) which was the opposite experience of a comedy where you're improvising. You just have to be word-perfect. There's something about that challenge that's really appealing to me right now, maybe because I've gotten improv out of my system," she grins.

It's a renewed mission statement made more than clear upon viewing her forthcoming projects. As well as *Ned Rifle*, there are dramas *About Alex* ("It's like a re-imagining of *The Big Chill*") and *The Driftless Area* ("I play a really different kind of character, I'm really excited for people to see that") and action comedy *Mortdecai*, with a small part amidst an A-List ensemble boasting Gwyneth Paltrow, Ewan McGregor and Johnny Depp. ("I played the homeland security agent interrogating [*Depp*]. I got to interrogate one of the greatest living actors, and I just tried to absorb every ounce of everything from him.")

Throw in a slew of recent voice work, popping up in *Monsters University*, the English language version of *From Up On Poppy Hill*, and a new adult animation comedy TV project *Golan The Insatiable* in which she plays a child who befriends a demon, and it feels like she's adding more than enough creative strings to her bow to help turn the perception tide. Not that she's worried either way. "I'm not afraid of being typecast. It happens to a lot of actors. Michael Cera is a very good friend of mine and the same thing happened to him. People just make assumptions about you. It's frustrating to have to combat people's perception of you," she muses. "I try to think of it more as a positive challenge. It gives me something to work towards and against. I take it as a compliment. If people believe it that much, then I must be doing something right." TF

***Life After Beth* opens on 3 October.**

WORDS MATTHEW LEYLAND

THE LADY VANISHES

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Disappearances can be deceiving in Gone Girl, the book sensation turned David Fincher thriller that's as twisted as it is twisty. TF quizzes the director, Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike on the year's deepest, darkest mystery.

"What do I want people to know about *Gone Girl*?" asks David Fincher, "as little as possible!" This, after yakking at some length to *TF* about the film in question. But he's being semi-serious; he has a bone to pick with the hype machine. "It's weird how [*keeping tight-lipped*] has become anathema to the process of selling movies," says the director. "You've got to tell them everything. That's *dull*." The goal with *Gone Girl* is to tease cinemagoers just enough to get them through the door. "And hopefully once we get them in," he continues, "they won't know what they're getting..."

The bare facts, at least, are that this is Fincher's spin on Gillian Flynn's 2012 novel, the water-cooler sensation that shifted over two million copies in its first year; a tale of man and missing wife, spiced with sex, violence and unreliable narration. Flynn's suspenser packs in some bombshell twists, but even readers-turned-moviegoers who think they know which r[illegible] to be pulled, and when, could be [illegible] Flynn herself adapted the scree[illegible]owed her novel no mercy. "I [illegible] somebody so prepared to slaugh[illegible]gs," marvels Fincher, between mouthfuls of eggy breakfast at a London hotel. "It's fantastic. You tend to think the cliché of the novelist-turned-screenwriter is that they just can't do the big pruning. And that wasn't the case with her."

The changes, Fincher says, were structural – "distilling [*the book*] down to its essence". With lots of internal monologuing to deal with, Fincher and Flynn set to work making things more 'show' than 'tell'. But despite all the condensing, "it's the whole story," promises Fincher. "The vibe is the same."

Does that mean that certain characters will remain as warts and all as they are on the page? Was there a need to make them more >>

sympathetic for the screen? "I don't know about 'sympathetic'," he replies. "Yeah, I'm not the guy to ask about that." Conventional heroes don't tend to hold sway in Fincher's features. For someone who started out on *Star Wars* (wrangling FX for *Return Of The Jedi*), he's less interested in role models than characters viewers recognise. "As long as they're human," as he puts it. "As long as they behave in ways where we go, 'Oh, I've done that.' I mean, I find Travis Bickle to be incredibly compelling and ultimately empathetic, even if he's a fucking monster. You kind of go, 'I know what it is to feel that out of step.'"

Gone Girl's main man, Nick Dunne, is certainly that. On the fifth anniversary of their unhappy marriage (flashbacks expose the faultlines), his wife Amy goes AWOL. Before long, he's pegged as prime suspect in her disappearance. And then the media hounding begins. Has Amy been murdered? Did Nick have anything to do with it? Innocent or guilty, one thing is clear: Nick is a bit of a dick. Which made him all the more refreshing to play, reckons Ben Affleck. "Once you unburden yourself of this sense that 'My character has to always be right, my character is number one on the call sheet so I have to be smarter than everyone else...' then you get into something really interesting," the actor says. Echoing Fincher, he adds: "It's not about likeable or not likeable – it's just about being real."

Affleck's chat with *TF* comes at the close of day umpteenth of the *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* shoot. If he's weary from a long day socking Henry Cavill's lantern jaw, or dustbusting the Batmobile, it doesn't show. Recalling his *Gone Girl* experience in avid detail, he rattles off a salty slice of Fincher advice: "'You've got to knock your dick in the dirt in this movie,' he said. 'This is not a vain performance. Your guy's huffy and hungover and makes bad decisions and is weak. Whether or not he killed his wife, it has to be a real possibility.'"

Missing in action: Rosamund Pike and Ben Affleck discuss the script with David Fincher; (below) Pike as Amy Dunne; (opposite) Affleck as her husband, Nick, alongside Tyler Perry.

Fincher, meanwhile, remembers pitching the part in slightly more delicate terms: "I said, 'This is, you know... not the most *flattering* role." Nick, says the director, is a man past his prime: once "the most charming-looking frat guy" but now "a few years removed from that". He's also, without getting into specifics, a big fat liar. Despite all this, Fincher was pleasantly surprised to find that Affleck "jumped in up to his eyeballs".

Like Nick, the star has endured his own trial-by-media, the guillotine coming down around the release of 'Bennifer' turkey *Gigli* (2003). Was his tabloid notoriety a factor in his casting? "Abso-fucking-lutely," grins Fincher.

The actor cracks a slightly wrier smile when we raise the same topic. "I get that a lot," he nods. "There were things I had to research for this movie, as with any movie. The one thing I didn't need to do any research for was what it feels like to see a representation of yourself in the media that is completely unrecognisable to you. To see yourself cast in a soap opera that you have no control over, and is airing every day – the sense of frustration that engenders."

All that, of course, is behind him now; with a Best Picture win – among other accolades – under his (utility) belt, "he's living the dream at the moment," as co-star Rosamund Pike puts it. "He's one of the titans of the industry!" If Affleck is now bona-fide big-time, then *Gone Girl* is Pike's best shot yet at achieving similar. When Fincher went looking for his Amy, first order of business was finding someone who could go eye-to-eye with Affleck – literally. "She needed to be tall – you know, statuesque. She needed to be a *prize*," he explains. He compares Pike with the classic cool of Faye Dunaway in *Bonnie And Clyde*: "You just go, 'what is this *face*?' Rosamund is stunning, and not in that catalogue-y way. I felt that, if we could make her American..."

Pike's pulled it off before (*Barney's Version* stands out); the difference with *Gone Girl* is that she's required to nail not just one accent but several. "She's a chameleon," Pike ventures, quickly adding: "I can talk about that much more after the film comes out!"

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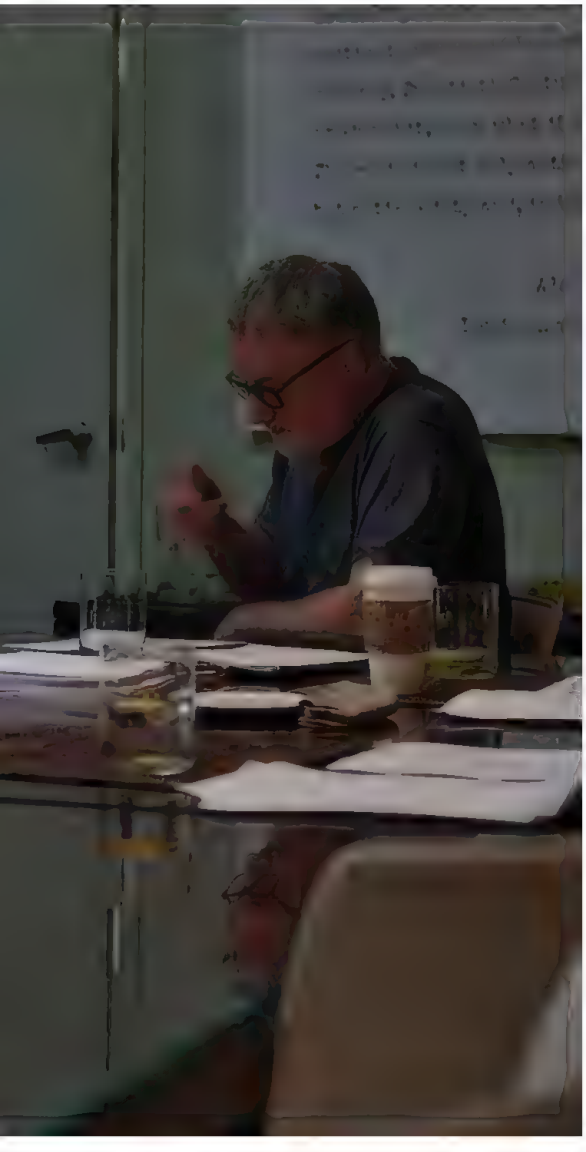

'IT'S A MOVIE ABOUT THE MASKS WE WEAR. ABOUT THE WAYS WE BETRAY ONE ANOTHER' BEN AFFLECK

But when it comes to Fincher's perfectionist leanings, she's singing from the rooftops. "People say to me, 'Was it his famous 100 takes [*per scene*]?' Who wouldn't want to do 100 takes, if you could?" Pike was thankful for the long shoot, unusual for a drama ("it was a schedule you might get for something with a lot of special effects"), relishing the freedom to experiment. And the way Affleck tells it, she was just getting started. "We'd do 50, 60 takes and Rosamund would say, 'Is that all? Do you think we had it?'" he recalls. "Even I would be like, 'Lady... we had it. If we don't have it by now, we should all quit!' She could've gone on forever..."

Despite all the together time in front of the camera, the two stars tended to stay separate early on. By the end of filming they were firm friends, but that initial distance turned out to be a boon, says Affleck: "There was something nice about the... not strained, but inscrutable aspect of our relationship that served the movie really well."

Affleck calls *Gone Girl* "emotionally draining". Pike found parts of it "brutal". (Her favourite way to wind down? "Ping pong".) David Fincher is a prince of darkness – even his cuddliest film, *The Curious Case Of Benjamin Button*, ends on a hauntingly sad note – and his latest promises to bring the pain, again. All the same, there's laughter in the dark. "I mean, we're not making the Dostoyevsky version here," states Fincher. "We wanted to have fun... but a kind of fun. Sardonic fun."

Both he and Affleck drop references to *Lolita* – the book and the Kubrick adaptation – a clue to *Gone Girl*'s tone? "It reminded me of Kubrick's film quite often," Affleck reveals, admiring the *2001: A Space Odyssey* director's ability to turn on a dime from serious to silly. If 'silly' seems unlikely in a Fincher film, we can at least look forward to some sly social satire. When Amy's disappearance goes public, a massive 'Missing' campaign starts up – an opportunity to take a sideways look at "the tragedy junkie in all of us," says Pike. "Our film is a satire on the way people borrow other people's pain and use it as their own." "Tragedy vampirism," Fincher calls it, "you see it a lot."

That's not the only theme kicking about. Affleck reels off a laundry list: "It's about personal failure, among other things. The things we hide from one another. It's a movie about the masks we wear. About the ways we betray one another. It's a movie about dreams that fall short. None of those things they'll put on the poster!" Affleck's inadvertent impression of Voiceover Man would make a nice fit for the movie's trailer, which seems to tick off all the above (as well as implying that the family cat *definitely* knows something.)

Yet, says Pike, it holds true to Fincher's mission to keep viewers in the dark, until they're actually, well, in the dark. "The trailer is so brilliant, because he's telling you virtually nothing – even if you think you're getting a lot," she says. "It whets your appetite and gets you into the world, but gives you no clue as to the extremes this film goes to." It's all about those fiendish twists, she reckons. "It's a story with some of the greatest surprises that I have ever come across. I think that's why this book is the one that really broke," she adds, alluding to Flynn's earlier works, *Sharp Objects* and *Dark Places* (a Charlize Theron-starring adap of which is on the way). "Her other books have been brilliant – but this is the one."

Could it also be the one that pushes Fincher's work to new emotional depths – dark, troubling ones? Evoking another Kubrick movie, *Eyes Wide Shut*, he suggests that, for all its narrative trickery, *Gone Girl* is rooted in a (marriage) bed of raw truth: "I think what Gillian talks about [*in the novel*] is the kind of anger and resentment that's fuelled by this pact a lot of us make with our spouses, which is: I'll keep my end of the bargain if you keep your end of the bargain, and then we can sort of co-exist in this narcissistic edifice. And the movie is very much talking about how the pressure of that ultimately reveals who we really are. And that's not always so pretty..." TF

***Gone Girl* opens on 3 October.**

Woody Allen

My life in pictures

Prolific filmmaker, neurotic genius, cinematic legend. In an exclusive in-depth interview, Woody Allen talks Total Film through his extensive career and his brand new comedy, Magic In The Moonlight.

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

Hard at work in New York filming his 45th, as-yet-untitled movie, Woody Allen, aged 78, is putting in six-day weeks but is more than happy to spend a chunk of his one day off discussing his 44th film, *Magic In The Moonlight*, with *Total Film*.

Set in the 1920s, it's the tale of a world-famous magician (Colin Firth) and his obsessively neurotic (what else?) quest to expose the chicanery of a young American medium (Emma Stone) who's giving hope to holidaying socialites in the south of France while taking their money. A breezy, zippy comedy that gently explores Woody's familiar themes of bittersweet relationships and existential crises while massaging viewers' ears and eyeballs with gorgeous, sun-drenched locales, chic costumes and another of his beloved jazz soundtracks, *Magic In The Moonlight* sees Allen continue his late-career resurgence after scoring two of his biggest critical and commercial hits with *Midnight In Paris* and *Blue Jasmine*.

Allen's career as a multiple award-winning director, writer and actor is now in its sixth decade, with both the abundance and quality of his work establishing him as a true cinema icon. Here he proves as humble and engaging as ever as he talks through some of his most memorable pictures...

Magic In The Moonlight 2014

"I was an amateur magician when I was younger so I read a lot about magic. And in the 1920s and going into the '30s, there was an enormous amount, internationally, of fake spiritualism. People were being bilked out of their money with fake séances and fake predictions of the future and psychic readings and ghost photographs. The people who perpetrated these things fooled the general public quite easily and they fooled the scientists, too. But they could never fool magicians. So I wanted to do this story and I wanted to set it in Europe because it was an international phenomena. It seemed like the south of France would be a very colourful, beautiful place to set it, and rich people gathered there, so it was a good spot for con artists to go.

"Colin Firth's character wants to debunk Emma Stone's spiritualist but deep down he hopes she is genuine. I have no illusions about life after death. I think now the same way I felt when I was five or six years old – life is a random, physical, meaningless phenomenon, and it has no purpose or specialness or divinity, it's just an accident that doesn't signify anything, and when you're gone you're gone. Of course, it would be a great comfort if there was suddenly some scientific breakthrough tomorrow and we learned there was more. If there was proof of it, if life accrued to something and didn't end with death but went on to something more positive and rewarding, you would see an unbelievable change in the human race.

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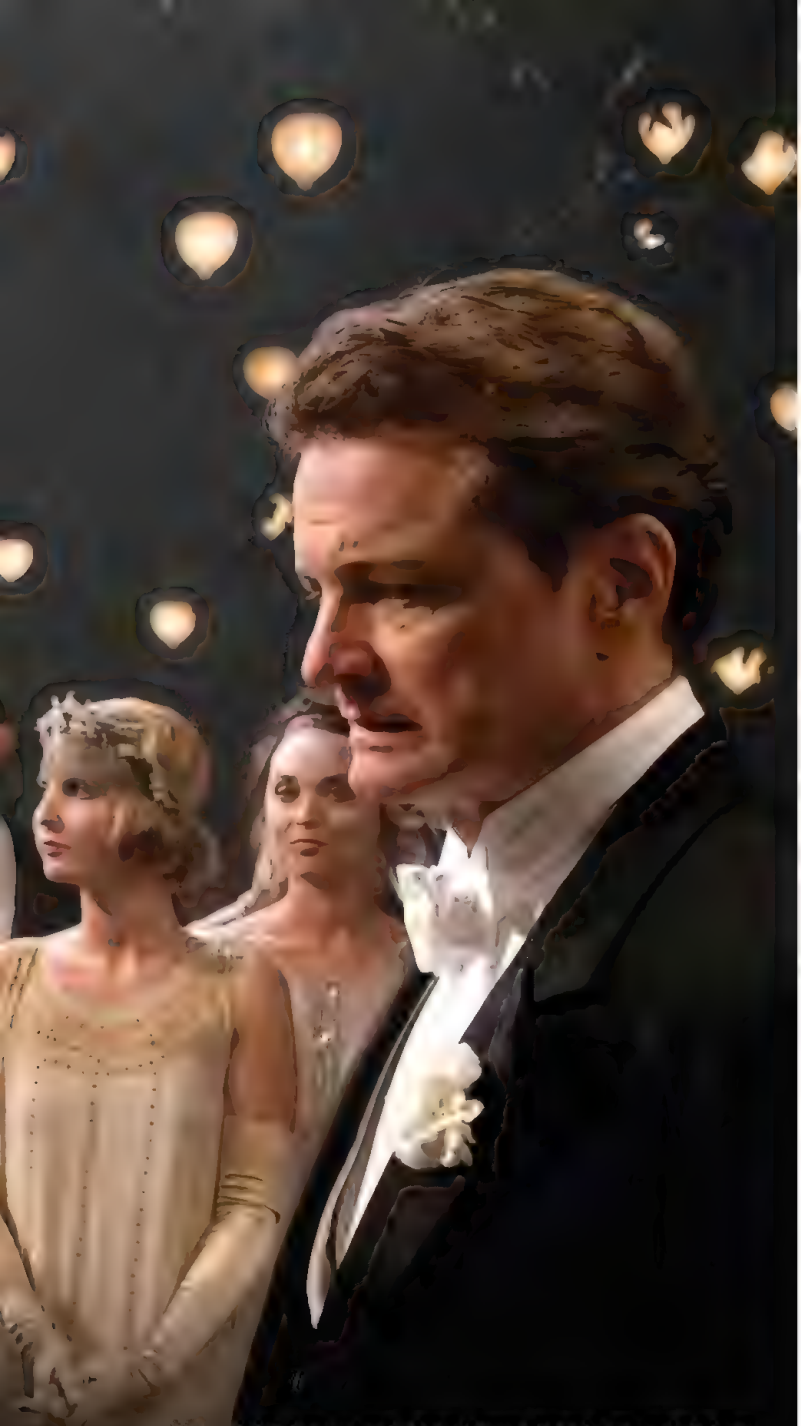

"At first I didn't know much about Emma Stone because she's been, for the most part, in those young people's films, commercial comedies that I wouldn't go and see. Then I was on my treadmill and surfing through the channels, and I saw her in some kind of silly little teenage movie. I thought, 'My God, she's interesting looking, and she's a very good actress – very amusing and charming. So when I was putting this film together, her name came up. And she was in New York, I think for this Spider-Man thing, and she came by to where I work and we chatted for a few minutes, and when she left I knew she'd be perfect for the little American medium that Colin's character falls in love with.

"I had a wonderful time working with her. I found her to be a wonderful actress with great poise and timing and charm. She's beautiful but there's something more. She's got some special kind of look that probably comes from her personality, which is quite spectacular if you meet her. There are a lot of beautiful actresses, young ones, older ones, and just a few of them have something special. You get an Emma Stone or Scarlett Johansson or Jennifer Lawrence and they just light up the screen.

"When I work with this new generation of actresses, I don't compare them to the actresses I used to work with. I just sometimes think how unlucky I am that they've come along now because I'm too old to play opposite them!"

Behind the camera: Woody in character and at the helm for *Sleeper*.

Sleeper 1973

"I had the idea that I was going to do a film in two parts, with an intermission. A very long film, maybe four hours. In the first part of the film, I would be a guy in New York going through the usual nonsense and relationships, and then at the end of the first part I would fall into a cryogenic vat and get frozen. There would be an intermission and people would come back for the second half and when the screen lit up they'd be 150 years in the future.

"Then when I started writing it, it was too insurmountable a task, too much writing. So I got with my friend Marshall Brickman [*who also co-wrote* Annie Hall, Manhattan *and* Manhattan Murder Mystery] and we decided we'd start right away with just the second half.

"There's a lot of physical and slapstick humour in *Sleeper*. It's standard difficulty to film. Some scenes come very easily and work out very well, some scenes come easy and you're disappointed with them later, and some scenes you struggle and struggle with and then you're surprised by how effective they are later. It's very random. People remember the banana skin gag [*Woody's character repeatedly slips over on the 6ft peel of a scientifically engineered banana*] but it wasn't terribly difficult to film." >>

Manhattan 1979

"You know, there's a big difference between what you set out to make and what you wind up making. When you write the thing, everything happens in your mind's eye so it happens perfectly: people walk across the room gracefully and hang up their coat perfectly... And then when you're actually there, and the wind is blowing, it's cold, and you're not sure where to put the camera... What you wind up with is not this beautiful, streamlined work you envisioned so you become disappointed, and I was.

"But for some reason, audiences all over the world hooked into that film. I *was* happy with the way it looked. Gordon Willis [*Woody's regular DoP in the late '70s and first half of the '80s*] was a genius. I remember Gordon and I sitting in a restaurant before we made that picture, and we were talking about working in anamorphic widescreen. Up to then, all the pic[illegible]s that h[illegible] been done like that we're cowb[illegible] pictures or war pictures, and we t[illegible] to ourselves, 'Why don't we do a[illegible] intimate love story in widescree[illegible] create an interesting tension?' We w[illegible] always going to do it in black and wh[illegible] because New York City has that [illegible] feeling in black and white, I guess fro[illegible] seeing it in so many old movies and in newsreels.

"I wasn't happy with my performance but no actor ever is. When I showed *Magic In The Moonlight* to Emma Stone, she said, "I love the picture but I didn't like me." That happens all the time. I remember speaking to Richard Burton years ago, when I was just starting out, and he said to me, "I never, ever, ever watch my films." I thought that was so strange but I learned quickly that he was absolutely right."

New York[illegible] (Allen) and Tracy (Mari[illegible] Hemingway) in *Manhatta*

Stardust Memories 1980

"It was great fun to make and the picture came out exactly to my liking. It was a picture that, when it came out, very few people liked. They felt the lead character, a film director, was me, and that I was demeaning my audience, saying my audience were boorish grotesques who are grasping... But of course I wasn't saying that. I would never have said that because I'd have been too smart to say that, to turn on my audience. I was just showing a guy who had everything, who was famous and rich, and who was still miserably unhappy and having some sort of nervous breakdown.

"There were so many people who would say to me, "How can he be unhappy? He had so much money and he was so famous..." I felt that was a very shallow criticism, as if fame and money answer the existential anxieties of life, which they do not. I can, however, understand the criticism, "Oh, it's just Woody's *8½*." Very often you'll make a picture and people will compare it to other pictures, and sometimes, either consciously or unconsciously, because the themes are the same, you do evoke other pictures. So I feel that's fair. I love Fellini's movies, he's right up there with Bergman and Kurosawa and Renoir.

"At the end of *Stardust Memories*, my character says, 'I would trade both my Oscars for another minute... one more *second*... of life.' I think anybody would do that. When it comes down to it, all those awards and the adulation, all those superficial things, are meaningless. What you want is health and longevity. They are the real values in life, not the awards that people give you, and especially the awards that you have to campaign for."

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Annie Hall 1977

"I had confidence because I'd done a few films and I was feeling more in control of the medium. I'd been successful in that there were people laughing at my humour. I felt I should be trying to go deeper with my films, I should do more dramatic movies and then one day I'd maybe try a musical, and one day a murder-mystery, and a fake documentary... I felt that if I didn't do that, I would stagnate. I also felt there was definitely a film in me talking to the audience – if I addressed the audience directly and talked about myself personally, many people would have the same feelings or the same problems.

"A lot of people said to me when I was doing *Annie Hall*, "Why do you want to do this? You're sacrificing a lot of laughs." I kept saying, "Here, I'm hoping they get interested in the story and I won't have to give them three laughs a minute; they'll take one laugh a minute or one every two minutes but they won't walk out because they'll be interested in the story."

"The picture clicked with people. The *relationship* clicked with people. It wasn't the standard Hollywood fake relationship. It was more real in terms of how a relationship plays out. And Keaton emerged as a great movie star. You can't discount that. Annie could have been played by somebody else – though Diane's real name is Diane Hall; she had to change it to Keaton, which is her mother's maiden name, because there was a Diane Hall in Actors' Equity – and it may not have been that successful.

"She was suddenly this larger-than-life, loveable, hilarious, beautiful character who just burst on the scene. And everyone in America loved the way she spoke, they loved the way she dressed. Everything about her was role-modelling to people."

Husbands And Wives 1992

"I wanted to make a film about a neurotic bunch of people and I wanted the style to reflect their inner neuroses. I felt I would make the film with no acquiescence to the standards of film rules: I would have actors looking in the same direction, I would cut whenever I wanted, I would jump cut; I was not going to obey any of the niceties of filmmaking. We did no rehearsals with the camera and the actors walked wherever they wanted; I told the camera operator, "Get what you can!" I was very happy with the way that film came out. And it was a quicker way to work. I came in under budget. It was both cheaper and faster.

"The relationships in the film are more volatile than in many of my other movies but you don't have to be in a dark place to write dark material. People often ask me about that but there's no correlation between my work and my mood. Things could be terrible and I could be working on a comedy, or everything going just delightfully and I'll get an idea for a more tragic movie. It's strictly by chance."

Family affair: Hannah (Mia Farrow), and her sisters (Barbara Hershey and Dianne Wiest).

Hannah And Her Sisters 1986

"I wanted to do an ensemble film because at that time I was very into Chekhov and I always felt Chekhov's plays were ensembles. I wanted to do something with different characters and different stories intermingling with one another, and while it doesn't have the depth and brilliance of Chekhov, it was the best I could do at the time. I always regretted the ending of the picture. My original ending was a lot less happy, more Chekhovian, but when I saw it, it didn't work. I don't mind a sad ending but this one wasn't earned by the film. It hung up there. So I had to change the ending and make it a little more upbeat.

"Dianne Wiest was wonderful in that picture. She is one of the greats, for sure. Dianne's won two Academy Awards. Juliet Taylor [*Woody's long-time casting director*] put me in touch with her, saying, "There's this great actress..." She's someone who had played Lady Macbeth and she'd been in Chekhov plays. She's fantastic. I'd love to find something to work with her on again [*Allen worked with Wiest five times between 1985 and 1994, but not since*]. She's a friend in life, too." >>

The Purple Rose Of Cairo 1985

"That's one that I brought to the scr the way I wanted it. It looked right, [*Farrow*] did a great job, all the actors did a great job – I did what I wanted to do and it came out great. I felt that if people didn't like it, y'know, it didn't matter to me. I *hoped* that people would like it and fortunately it succeeded, but if it hadn't, it wouldn't have bothered me. The very first film I was ever associated with in my life, *What's New Pussycat?*, I wrote, I did not direct, and it was a film that I couldn't stand. I thought it was dreadful, embarrassing. Now it made a fortune f money – I think it was the most successful comedy, financially, to its time – but I got no pleasure out of it at all.

"One of the themes of the film is the magic of movies. When I was a young boy I disappeared into the movie houses all the time. In those days, parents used to admonish kids, saying, "Don't sit in the movie house, it's bad for your eyes, you should be out getting fresh air." And of course my friends listened and went to the beach but I stayed in the movie houses and sa everything two or three times. I loved movies, it was an escape for me. School life or home life would be drab and then you'd walk into a movie theatre and you'd see pirates or penthouses. When I was older, I escaped into movies on the other side of the camera. I spend a year at a time working on a picture and I work with beautiful actresses and charming men and they say sparkling dialogue and jokes, and they're talented, and I work with great costumes and beautiful music."

Screen time: Mia Farrow and Jeff Daniels in *The Purple Rose Of Cairo*.

Midnight In Paris 2011

"It surprised me completely when it was the biggest commercial hit of my career. When I did the film, none of us – and when I say 'us', I mean the producers, and my friends – thought it would be a hit. We thought it would be a nice story but we thought the movie-going public is not going to have even heard of any of these people. They won't know who Zelda Fitzgerald is, and who Buñuel is. Maybe a couple of people will know who Picasso is, or Ernest Hemingway, but they certainly won't be too familiar with their work. We were stunned that the young people – older people we could account for – just crowded the theatres and were very, very interested in it.

"The movie features with the characters of Owen Wilson and Marion Cotillard falling in love. But would they have been as happy in two years' time? In real life, the honeymoon period generally lasts fora certain period of time – then theerotic attraction fades and then it's just kind of basic living, and then down the line it turns into neurotic dependency. I'm not an optimist when it comes to human relations."

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ALLSTAR, KOBAL

Blue Jasmine 2013

"That story was based on a true story that my wife told me about someone. I wrote the story as it was described to me, embellishing here and there to make certain things more interesting and dramatic, though the real facts were dramatic to begin with.

"I tend to write about upper-class people and I don't know why because I'm lower class myself. My parents both had to work for a living. My father had a million low [*paid*] jobs – driving taxis, being a waiter – and my mother always had to work to make ends meet. I grew up enjoying it. But for some reason, when I started making films, the subjects that interested me were more intellectual and upper class and neurotic. In *Blue Jasmine*, I feel I did a good copy of people; I live in New York in a very upper-class area and I watch. Not deliberately, but I'm just immersed in the habits and lifestyles, so it's easy for me to write about. And the lower-class people, like Bob Cannavale's character, I grew up with, so I feel very comfortable writing those types of people.

"When you write something, it's dead on the page. And then a great actor or actress brings everything to it. When you hear Cate Blanchett doing it, or Scarlett, or Diane Keaton, the whole thing gets filtered through their personality. It gave me pleasure, for Cate, that she won the Academy Award. She wanted it very much and she worked very hard on the script. And then, when the picture was over... Y'know, the Academy Award thing is so political and you really have to work for it, go to lunches, appear on television. Cate wanted it and campaigned, so I felt very happy for her." TF

***Magic In The Moonlight* opens on 19 September.**

WRITTEN BY RICHARD JORDAN

GRAND DESIGNS

With its A-list voice cast, anthemic soundtrack and cutting-edge animation, **The Book Of Life** belies its humble origins. Director Jorge Gutierrez talks Total Film through an Indie 'toon with huge ambitions.

"Pain is temporary, film is forever." As echoed by so many filmmakers over the years, Michael J Fox's wise words have become something of a mantra for the staff of Reel FX – the animation studio where director Jorge Gutierrez is putting the finishing touches to his feature debut, the Guillermo del Toro-produced *The Book Of Life*. But despite a limited budget, hectic production schedule and having "a third of the artists that Pixar would have" at his disposal, he's refused to scrimp on the details... "We always joke – this is the little movie that could," he laughs. "Animation's often all about planning, but I can't say that about this movie. It was super-spontaneous. There were moments where things would change so drastically because of our schedule or resources, and we just went with it. And it worked!"

It's August 2014, and *Total Film* has travelled to Dallas where, a stone's throw from the city's giant mirrored skyscrapers, Reel FX's charming headquarters stand. In the spirit of true Texan hospitality, we're barely through the front door before a bulging breakfast burrito and a large, freshly brewed coffee are thrust into our hands, fuelling us for the guided tour led by a beaming Gutierrez and his loyal crew. There may be wall-to-wall computer screens and monolithic servers (totalling over 300 terabytes of storage space), but the office is far from boring: workstations are lit by fairy lights and flanked by *Star Wars* and Marvel action figures, whiteboards display as many doodles as to-do lists, and brightly coloured paper-chains and lanterns drape from the ceilings, in celebration of *The Book Of Life*'s eye-popping production design.

A love letter to Latin American folklore set around the 'Day of the Dead' (an annual festival that celebrates departed family and friends), *Life* follows the story of wannabe mariachi Manolo (Diego Luna), who's fighting with childhood pal Joaquin (Channing Tatum) over the beautiful Maria (Zoe Saldana) – with gods La Muerte (Kate del Castillo) and Xibalba (Ron Perlman) betting on their respective champions. But when Xibalba cheats by offing Manolo and taking him out of the race, the hero must fight his way out of the 'Land of the Remembered' to reclaim his one true love. Combining surreal animation, Mexican makeovers of classic songs and a Tarantino-style mash-up of influences (everything from Tim Burton to Ennio Morricone), one thing's for sure – this isn't your typical 'toon. "I feel computer animation is getting a bit stale," says Gutierrez. "It's time to do things a little differently..."

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[illegible]: (clockwise, from above) Manolo in the [illegible] of the Reme[illegible] Joaquin, Ma[illegible] and Manolo in the L[illegible] Living; producer Guillermo del [illegible] director Jorge Gutierrez; Reel FX's Dallas HQ

THE PRODUCER

"I pitched Guillermo my original version of the movie, which was a 2 hour 40 minute R-rated film," laughs Gutierrez. "He said, 'Jorge, you can't do this. We've got to make something that will actually be released!' One of the biggest pieces of advice he gave me was when I showed him the story reel. He said, 'You're cutting this like it's animation. Throw all those ideas out, and just cut it like live-action.' It really shook the way I approached animation. But Guillermo's been there, as he put it: 'When you need me, I'll be there. When you don't need me, I'll disappear.' That's what Pedro Almodóvar told him on *The Devil's Backbone*. And he's been true to his word. He's not only helped me on the filming side, he's helped me as a friend. He's the guy in my corner; he picks up my teeth and puts them back in!"

THE VOICES

"Having Guillermo's name was huge in the beginning with the actors," Gutierrez admits. "Because at that point, neither I nor Reel FX had ever made a movie. First-time director, first-time studio... Channing Tatum's not going to go to that meeting! But having this giant of the industry by my side really opened all those doors. Honestly, without him, it wouldn't have worked. Even though [*20th Century*] Fox is our partner and distributor, we're still a little indie movie. We can't afford any of the big stuff because of our budget. All the actors, everybody just said, 'OK, we'll take a cut because we believe in the movie.' I'm still amazed by it!"

>>

THE DESIGN

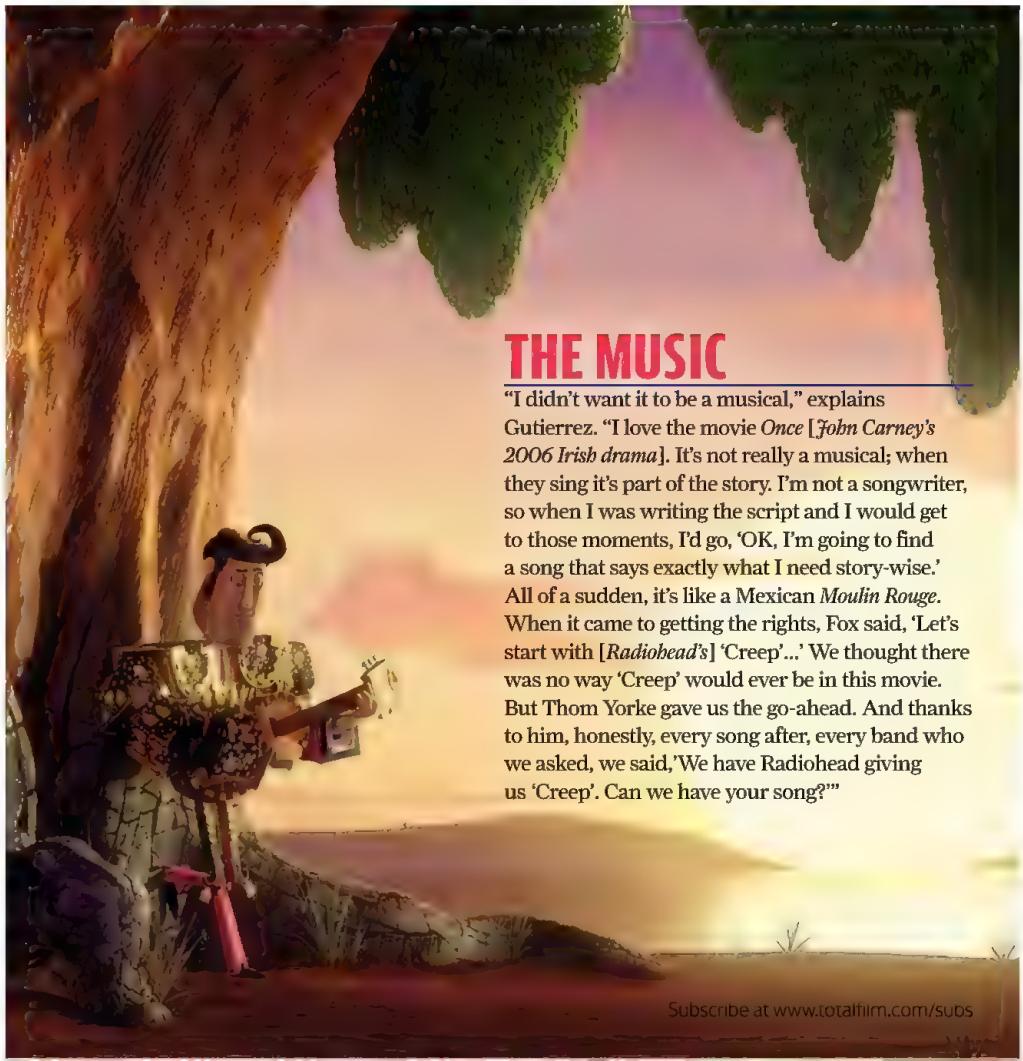
"The mandate was: our 'Art Of' book has to look exactly like the movie," says Gutierrez of the film's faithfulness to the original designs. "Every artist poured their heart and soul into that idea. The 3D element was huge, too. Lots of studios do their movie in 2D and then do the stereoscoping after, but we mastered in 3D because I wanted to use it for the story. The Land of the Living is a little flatter, but when Manolo dies and goes to the Land of the Remembered (see right), the 3D really hits. He goes down into this magical realm and it's very immersive, which works really well.

In terms of character design, I said from the beginning I didn't want to deal with guns, blood or anything real. There's a long history in animation, from Pinocchio to [Toy Story's] Woody, of bringing life to inanimate objects, and my favourite folk art is those wooden maquettes. By using that style, we didn't have to worry about some of the harsher things about the story. But we were very ambitious. Right now, we have a bull made out of the bones of 1,000 bulls. That was really hard. And then there's Xibalba – he's one of the most complicated characters ever made. That's what I love about animation, though. Why would you do realism? Too many people are afraid to take risks. The whole point of animation is you can do literally anything!"

> "TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS. THE POINT OF ANIMATION IS YOU CAN DO ANYTHING!"
>
> **Jorge Gutierrez**

THE INFLUENCES

"I was in film school when *Pulp Fiction* came out," Gutierrez recalls. "It was one of those movies that made my brain explode. It taught me a big lesson, which was: you can take things from everything you like and make them your own by mixing them together. Quentin [*Tarantino*] did that with music, with visuals, with genre... he did it with everything! *The Book Of Life* is like that. I love samurai movies. I love kung-fu movies. I love spaghetti westerns. Tim Burton's a lifelong hero of mine – *The Nightmare Before Christmas* is one of my all-time favourite movies, and I always kept seeing little references to Day of the Dead in his films. So all those influences are in there."



THE MUSIC

"I didn't want it to be a musical," explains Gutierrez. "I love the movie *Once* [*John Carney's 2006 Irish drama*]. It's not really a musical; when they sing it's part of the story. I'm not a songwriter, so when I was writing the script and I would get to those moments, I'd go, 'OK, I'm going to find a song that says exactly what I need story-wise.' All of a sudden, it's like a Mexican *Moulin Rouge*. When it came to getting the rights, Fox said, 'Let's start with [*Radiohead's*] 'Creep'...' We thought there was no way 'Creep' would ever be in this movie. But Thom Yorke gave us the go-ahead. And thanks to him, honestly, every song after, every band who we asked, we said,'We have Radiohead giving us 'Creep'. Can we have your song?'"

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Under world: (clockwise, from above) the colourful Land of the Remembered; (left to right) Xibalba and La Muerte; Manolo plays guitar; piggy sidekick Chuy.

THE GODS

"They're completely made up," reveals Gutierrez of the film's immortal adversaries, Xibalba and La Muerte. "I mean, there's a certain iconography there from Mexican folk tales, like God and Death. I wanted to create a sort of Greek mythology, with these beings making wagers on mankind. It was inspired by that. Again, Ron Perlman [*Xibalba*] would not be in the movie if it wasn't for Guillermo. We were able to get a what I call a 'Quentin Tarantino cast' – a great mix of indie and character actors mixed with big Hollywood names." TF

***The Book Of Life* opens on 24 October.**

ALTERNATIVE HERO. MOTORMOUTH. KING OF COOL.

JOHN CUSACK

WILL ALWAYS BE AN '80S TEEN ICON BUT HE'S NOW SHEDDING HIS PERSONA AND GROWING INTO CHARACTER ROLES. NEXT UP: CANNIBALISING HIS OWN IMAGE IN DAVID CRONENBERG'S HOLLYWOOD HORROR STORY, MAPS TO THE STARS. "IT'S A FRONTIER TOWN," HE SAYS. "THERE ARE A LOT OF PREDATORY, FREAKISH CREATURES..."

WORDS **JAMIE GRAHAM** PORTRAIT **NICOLAS GUERIN**

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JOHN CUSACK

John Cusack has made a career out of being an outsider, on screen and off. As a teen idol in the '80s, he starred for John Hughes in *Sixteen Candles*, Rob Reiner in *The Sure Thing* and Cameron Crowe in *Say Anything...*, but his sincere, articulate, hangdog characters stood to the left of people's hero Ferris Bueller. There was no driving of Ferraris and swivelling of hips in gleeful parades for this guy, just the swivelled-finger-and-boom-box-heart gesture of planting his feet, rocking a knee-length trench coat and hoisting a ghetto blaster. Likewise, Cusack made a point of shuffling his 6ft3in frame to the edges of the Brat Pack, observing his compatriots' firefly fame with suspicion. No wonder critic Pauline Kael described him as having "question marks in his eyes".

When, between 1997 and 2002, he enjoyed something of a second coming, with mainstream fare like *Con Air*, *Pushing Tin* and *America's Sweethearts* allowing him to appear in such quality leftfield work as *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *The Thin Red Line* and *Being John Malkovich*, he avoided networking at LA parties and instead preferred to live in Chicago. Never afraid to criticise Hollywood and its commercially minded, committee-made movies, he strove to represent an "authentic voice" while seeking to appear in "a work of art".

Which makes it something of a surprise that Cusack, now 48, is today dressed in a black designer suit and a tightly knotted tie of the deepest purple, with an electronic cigarette waving in his right hand. What's happened to the guy who casually tapped ash between questions and plucked at a ragged t-shirt?

"The only time I wear a suit is at something like this, and then rarely," he sighs. *This* is the Cannes Film Festival, with Cusack in town to talk about his snake-oil self-help guru Dr. Stafford Weiss in David Cronenberg's *Maps to The Stars*. More on that later. First, what's with the e-wand? It's all a bit... Hollywood. "No smoke, it doesn't hurt your lungs," he shrugs. Some people claim they're not much better than the real thing... "Do you think that might be the tobacco lobbyists?" he smirks.

'I KNEW GROSSE POINT BLANK HAD A PULSE. I KNEW IT WAS GOOD, BUT NOT HOW GOOD'

There's no danger that Cusack's mellowed. A tough interview who often gives one-line answers or peters out mid-sentence, he becomes engaged in fits and starts, his charisma igniting and his eyes gleaming. Talking through a 31-year career that's seen him work with John Sayles (*Eight Men Out*), Stephen Frears (*The Grifters*, *High Fidelity*), Clint Eastwood (*Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Evil*), Woody Allen (*Shadows And Fog*, *Bullets Over Broadway*), Spike Jonze (*Being John Malkovich*), Terrence Malick (*The Thin Red Line*) and Lee Daniels (*The Paperboy*, *The Butler*), he nonetheless dismisses 70 per cent of his 70-odd movies.

Maps To The Stars, he says, is one of the keepers. Directed by a filmmaker who's long been on his "bucket list", it's a chilling ogle at a Hollywood peopled by the self-absorbed, the status-obsessed and the psychopathic. Cusack, of course, is perfect casting – a long-time Hollywood whistleblower who's embedded in the industry (his father and four siblings are all actors) and who knows what it's like to blow hot and cold in a world where, as Cronenberg puts it, you can "die before you die". "It's a serious work you're looking at," he says, exhaling a jet of vapour as his eyes torch.

You've wanted to work with Cronenberg for a long time...

Yeah. I've seen all his films. I always like them. Even the ones I don't love... There are things in them that are interesting. He's thoughtful. It's not a film made by committee. It's not a bunch of executives trying to make a character more likeable.

Many people are labelling *Maps To The Stars* a Hollywood satire. But there's more to it than that, isn't there?

It's more like a Greek tragedy that just happens to be set in Hollywood. It's like some German fable where parents have to eat the bowels of their children. A horror story, but lyrical and dreamlike. Mythic. It seems to be in that space.

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Self-help: as Dr. Stafford Weiss in Cronenberg's *Maps To The Stars*.

Is Hollywood really populated by such bowel-eating monsters?
Absurdism and satire reflect true things. They make things a little more heightened than normal. I've seen all the archetypes in the movie, in LA.

But not as extreme as the characters in the movie?
No. I think it *is* that extreme.

You play an ugly character. What did you find to like in him?
I liked how different it is from me, and different from other things that I've played. You always blur yourself with the character, but it's not really you. Actors sometimes pretend to be the managers of their 'brand', but if you're making a good film, it's the opposite of a brand: you're just putting yourself out there and making yourself vulnerable. You know they say "I'll protect the franchise"? That just means protect the money – or protect the thing that's making someone money. Transactional. If you want to be an artist, that's not how you think.

Was there one particular person that informed your character?
No. But there are a lot of self-help gurus out in California, and life coaches and pop psychologists. It was an amalgamation of a lot of them.

LA's full of, shall we say, 'characters'...
Hollywood's a frontier town, right? There's always the uneasy feeling that you better make it here otherwise you've run out of continent. There's a palpable atmosphere. That's why the noir movies were set in LA, or California. There are a lot of strange, predatory, freakish creatures in Hollywood.

Is that why you live in Chicago?
I like a city that's more contained. You don't have to drive everywhere. LA is more about being in other people's homes. There's not a sense of public space. It's not like Chicago or New York, where you can be at home at 7:30 at night and have no plans, then you get a phone call and say, "OK, I'll go here..." The night happens. You just go out and get into the mix and get taken off for an adventure.

When you were a teenager, you had a reputation for partying. From what you've just said, it sounds like you still like to get out there...
Yeah. But also being spontaneous, you know? And people are people-watching in LA. There are people you want to avoid. If you don't want to be seen or want to keep it private, it's not a good scene.

When you were younger, you had an on-screen persona: smart, motor-mouthed, screwy. Is it fair to say you're now into a new chapter, exploring character roles?
Yeah, why not? I never felt like I didn't want to do those things when I was younger, it's just getting the opportunities. I've certainly been able to do more character stuff lately. I don't really remember what happened when I was a teenager anyway. It's so long ago.

Are there any roles you wouldn't take on?
I don't mind playing any part in a drama. It's great actually, not having to do one thing. You play a villainous character, you play a romantic character, a funny character... hopefully all in one.

How about a transformative performance? Like when Christian Bale loses three stone or bloats out?
I've done that before. It just probably didn't get in the awards circuit. But... yeah.

When did you do that?
I did an Edgar Allan Poe movie [The Raven] where I got super-thin, and then I got pretty weird for *The Paperboy*. I'd do whatever.

You're a private person. Would you not take on a role if you felt it was too exposing?
There's nothing I can think of that I wouldn't do. You always try to court that ground, in a way. That just means you're in an interesting psychic space.

How many of the movies that you've been in do you rate? The finished article can often be different to what you thought you were filming...
It's often disappointing. Not David's film though. The way he shoots... It's like Woody. I'm pretty sure David's assemblage was close to the finished film because he's so precise.

Many filmmakers cover every angle to safeguard themselves...
Over-covering is a young director's problem. And they manufacture speed editorially, by cutting >>

FIVE STAR TURNS

CUSACK'S CORKERS...

1 THE SURE THING 1985 ★★★★
After bit parts in *Class* and *Sixteen Candles*, a 19-year-old Cusack landed his first lead in Rob Reiner's romcom. His preppy college kid crosses America with a classmate (Daphne Zuniga) on the way to that titular hook-up (Nicollette Sheridan). "There was a vogue for movies about kids," Cusack recalls. "Suddenly I was doing leads."

2 BULLETS OVER BROADWAY 1994 ★★★★
"I'm an artist!" yells Cusack at the start of Woody Allen's '20s-set crime caper, which casts him as a troubled playwright attempting to put on a Mob-funded show. Essentially projecting Allen himself, Cusack lends a manic edge to Allen's knife-sharp comedy and proved he could swim with the big fish.

3 GROSSE POINTE BLANK 1997 ★★★★★
Cusack put his considerable height to good use as hitman-with-hang-ups Martin Blank in this cult thriller, convincing as an anti-hero who holds his own. Cusack had a co-writing credit and, in a nod to his days as a political activist, calls *GPB* "a metaphor for the people in the Bush White House".

4 HIGH FIDELITY 2000 ★★★★
Easily the best of the "10 or 15 good films" (his words) on Cusack's CV, this adaptation of Nick Hornby's love letter to emotional turmoil sees Cusack mope it up as record store owner (and romantic pariah) Rob Gordon. Hornby loved him and a clutch of romcom roles followed (*America's Sweethearts*, *Serendipity*).

5 THE PAPERBOY 2012 ★★★
After bubbly frat comedy *Hot Tub Time Machine* and so-so Poe thriller *The Raven*, Cusack busts the mould apart as a convicted murderer in Lee Daniels' swampy B-flick. "These days, I make fun of myself a lot more," Cusack says. Anybody who's seen his sensational 'psychic sex scene' with Nicole Kidman will agree... **CT/JW**

these different angles, instead of letting the actors hold. So when you see those things, you just go, "Argh." But David's film is a complete vision.

So what happens when you are on a set where the director is flailing?

I say things. Usually they're happy for the help. If the producers are using your name to get some money, you're damn right you better have a say in it. Because they put your face up there and they're gonna blame you for it, so on some level you try to protect yourself. It's more a case of producers and studios wanting to cut a film in the editing room. If you try to find the movie later, editorially, then you're fucked.

Does it happen often?

Not too often. I did a movie called *The Frozen Ground* [*playing real-life serial killer Robert Hansen*] with a young director and they took the movie from him and didn't even call him, just started re-cutting. Then they got him back and said "just make the best, shortest version you can", and he didn't have a say in the music. So, you know, he wrote the film, directed it, and there was a good film there... and then it becomes an auctioned off commodity where no one involved in making the film is cutting it. It can be a clusterfuck.

funny. I didn't have expectations, like, "I'll be really proud of this." I just thought, "There's a lot of good actors and we're all selling out at the same time. It'll be cool."

***Con Air* is great fun. You should watch it.**

I made a big one with Roland Emmerich [*in* 2012] – he's a real gentleman and really good at what he does. He's an honourable guy to work with. For that kind of experience, it was OK. But some of them are terrible.

How do you find this part of your job? The promotional interviews?

It depends. If you have a fun conversation with somebody, it's OK. I don't mind interviews. I don't like selling things that much. A lot of the job, you feel like it's selling things.

Let's have a fun conversation about your early work. Do you ever re-watch those movies?

No. If you see it on cable or something, sometimes you stop and look at it for a minute. I don't dwell on them. They're just memories, or dreams.

***Say Anything...*, *The Sure Thing* – even today, teenagers seem to connect with them.**

That's nice. I don't know if people still watch *The Sure Thing*, but I know *Say Anything...* still resonates. *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *High Fidelity*... there's a bunch of them.

'IT'S NICE WHEN PEOPLE, LATER ON, LOVE A MOVIE. MAKE YOUR SHIT AND PEOPLE WILL FIND IT'

Is it hard to maintain your artistic integrity if you're part of a system that's so money-driven?

Yes.

How do you cope with that?

You fail.

When you do a big studio movie – something like *Con Air* – do you do it to raise your profile and pay the bills, or do you enjoy it?

It depends on the people. *Con Air* was so long ago. I remember I was trying to get into a movie that would be more successful so that I could do *my* movies [*Cusack formed New Crime Productions with high-school friends Steve Pink and D.V. DeVincentis in 1992*]. And it's alluring and you get a lot of money and they say it'll be a big box office thing and things will change. I never saw the movie. And I was never like, "This is going to be really good." I thought maybe if people like it, it'll be kitsch or

When a film enters the popular culture, it must be hugely satisfying for you, and a bit strange...

It's nice. Because everything gets judged like it's a competition or a horse race: number one film for the weekend! So it's nice when people still, later on, love a movie. Very gratifying. You have to think for the long term. Make your shit and people will find it. I did a movie called *Better Off Dead*. It came and it went [*clicks fingers*] in theatres. And now, 30 years later, people still talk to me about it. I sort of suspect that some of the movies I've done in the last 10 years will have that same thing.

Which ones?

I think *The Paperboy*'s gonna have a real cult following. It's a weird, wild, unruly thing, but there are parts of it that are striking and it has a cult-y vibe. Let's see what else. People are starting to find *Max* and come up to me about it now. There's this political agitprop movie that I did called *War, Inc.* It's a weird movie but people talk to me about it.

Social media now helps films to be found...

You can't kill a movie anymore. When I was a kid, a film could get made and if it didn't get distributed, nobody would ever see it. And there are these great stories, like *Sweet Smell Of Success* came out in the '50s and was totally panned. Of course, it's a masterpiece now. *It's A Wonderful Life* they gave terrible reviews. They sit on a shelf until somebody says, "Oh, we have a Tony Curtis movie, let's put it on cable..." They show it on late-night TV and then it's rediscovered. Now, that can't happen. People just talk to each other, find out what they think. It's awesome.

***Grosse Pointe Blank* has many ardent fans.**

Thanks. You sort of know when things have

NICOLAS GUERIN/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES, ALLSTAR

LIFELINE

28 JUNE 1966
John Paul Cusack is born in Evanston, Illinois (four years after actress sis Joan).

1984-85
Brat-Pack breakout in *Sixteen Candles*, *The Sure Thing* and *Better Off Dead*.

1989
Cements teen idol status holding a boom-box above his head in *Say Anything...*

1994
Teams up with Woody Allen for Oscar-nominated *Bullets Over Broadway*.

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Getting a girl: in 1985's *The Sure Thing* with Daphne Zuniga.

a pulse. When it first came out, it wasn't super-successful, so I always take it with a grain of salt. Some of my movies were celebrated when they came out but are not really good after a while, and some of the movies that people didn't really like became much more successful. It's very rare that something comes out and is appreciated for what it is right away. I knew *GPB* was alive, and had a pulse. I knew it was good. You never know *how* good. But we gave that one our best shot.

Did you stumble into acting or were you a movie nut as a kid?

I loved going to the movies.

Is it something you still do?

No. I don't want to see a bunch of commercials, then see 17,000 previews for *Captain America 5*. I used to go to movie houses and you'd see the Francis Coppola, or the Kurosawa, and then you'd go on a summer's night and see a double feature. You'd go with your friends and it would be a big theatre with a balcony. It was a special time. Now you just feel you're strapped into the theme park ride. But it's also being famous – the last place I want to go is a mall.

Do you still watch movies at home?

Yeah, I have a nice big screen. I enjoy that a lot.

How have movies changed since you started out?

It's changed totally. The movie business that was working while we were doing *The Grifters* is dead. That model's gone. Scale, tone... gone. The space that I played in in films, in my twenties and thirties, is now exclusively on TV. And in order to do these types of films, you have to work with somebody like Cronenberg, or do a film for free.

You're talking about the disappearance of movies budgeted in the $10m to 20m bracket, yes?

I was in Puerto Rico and I saw John Malkovich, who I was lucky enough to work with three times. He goes, "The movie business we were in 10 years ago? That's gone. There's nothing." So there's just *The Avengers*. The studios make the *Supermans* and *Batmans* and *Tarzans*. There isn't the $10m or $15m or $20m movies that are for adults and take a risk. It's now gone to cable TV. They've started to serialise adult content.

Is TV something you'd like to go into?

You think about it because there's much better writing there. But do you really want to do something for that long? It would be interesting to do something I can serialise for a while.

Something like *True Detective* or *Fargo*?

Yeah, that'd be interesting.

You've worked with Woody Allen, Clint Eastwood and Terrence Malick. Who's left on your wish list?

I'd like to work with Scorsese. Bennet Miller is a filmmaker who I think is really talented. I'd love to work with Fincher. But you have to be asked.

Can you reach out to these directors?

Sure, but it doesn't mean it will happen.

You have a couple of movies in the can. The adap of Stephen King's *Cell* looks exciting. Do you have hopes for that?

I do. It's something I was working on with this producer, Richard Saperstein. He produced *1408* [*based on a King short story*]. He hired this director, Kip Williams, who did *Paranormal Activity 2* and *The Door In The Floor*. He's kind of an interesting filmmaker who can do a lot of different genres. Very smart guy. We adapted the King book. Mark Leyner, the writer who I write with, worked on it, and Kip wrote on it, and I wrote on it.

Do you like King as a writer? You were also in *Stand By Me*, based on his novella *The Body*, in a cameo.

King's great to adapt. His ideas are vital. He dreams things before they happen – like, culturally. He's ahead of the curve. He's cavalier in the way he churns out his books, but they're very resourceful. I enjoy working with him.

What else does the future hold? Would you join *The Expendables* franchise, if asked?

What's my price? What do I have to do in it?

Take some bumps and bruises.

Do I have to throw a knife in someone's chest and say, "Stick around"? I think I can do it. Do you think I can get the part?

Sure. On the younger end of the scale, naturally...

How many of those do I have to do? If the price goes up every one...

You have to sign up for three movies.

Three? This is an obscene conversation. You have to write I was laughing at this! I'm setting myself up to be killed right now... TF

***Maps To The Stars* opens on 26 September.**

1997
Mixes cult and multiplex success with *Grosse Pointe Blank* and *Con Air*.

1999-2001
Picks up plaudits for *Being John Malkovich* and *High Fidelity*; gets romantic with *America's Sweethearts* and *Serendipity*.

2009-2012
Heads up megabuster *2012*, sci-fi comedy *Hot Tub Time Machine* and Poe thriller *The Raven*.

2014-2015
Stars in Cronenberg's *Maps To The Stars*. Fights zombies in Stephen King adap *Cell*.

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EDITED BY
MATTHEW LEYLAND

The Total Film home entertainment bible

Lounge

★★★★★ Encore! Encore!
★★★★ Heady stuff
★★★ Sound enough
★★ Tour de farce
★ The show must go off

Why Fassbender has true rock-star quality in **Frank**

A kind of magic

FILM DISC OF THE MONTH

ILLUSTRATION BY LIZZY THOMAS

NEW RELEASES 29.08.14 – 25.09.14

Lounge DVD & Blu-ray

About Last Night	★★★	p127
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Blue Ruin	★★★★	p126
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L'Assassino	★★★★	p131
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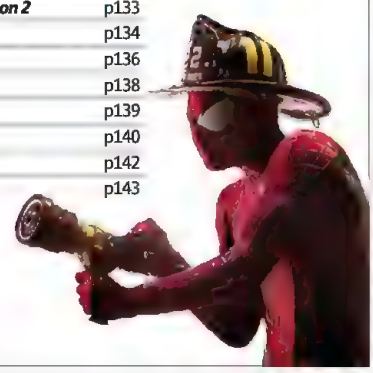
Hose in charge: *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*, page 124



Head games

Michael Fassbender is masked and dangerously funny.

FRANK 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

OUT 15 SEPTEMBER DVD, BD

LOOK, JON, YOU'RE JUST GOING to have to go with this," says Scoot McNairy's manager Don to Domhnall Gleeson's budding keyboard player, explaining why the lead singer of avant-garde (and virtually unpronouncable) band Soronprfbs permanently wears a large papier-mache mask on his head. As mantras go, this laissez-faire attitude would seem like a perfect entry point for anyone watching Lenny Abrahamson's *Frank*, one of the strangest, sweetest and saddest indies to arrive from this side of the Atlantic in many a year.

Frank is the lead singer and creative force behind Soronprfbs – a charismatic 6ft frontman from Bluff City, Kansas, who just so happens to hide his features in a jauntily coloured, oversized fake head. We're not talking Daft Punk or Slipknot here, donning facial masks for on-stage performances. Frank is dedicated to his disguise 24/7 – even in the shower – to the point where he has to describe his expressions with the same regularity that Gleeson's social media-obsessed Jon peppers his tweets with banal hashtags ("cheese and ham panini – #livinthedream").

Those of a certain age will remember the film's source – Chris Sievey and his creation Frank Sidebottom, a helium-voiced entertainer with a papier-mâché head who became an '80s kids' TV regular. But *Frank* is neither a biopic of Sievey, who died in 2010, nor a film about his alter-ego; as the end credits dedication says, it's inspired by his "outsider spirit" – a feeling that flows through the veins of Irish-born Abrahamson's film (and indeed his earlier movies, *Adam & Paul*, *Garage* and *What Richard Did*).

Creative differences

From the early scenes, when office drone Jon watches Soronprfbs' last keyboard player Lucas try and drown himself (immediately recalling Spinal Tap's succession of expired drummers), *Frank* sets itself up as a film about the pressures and pleasures of the creative process. Musical genius is hard to come by – as Jon soon discovers, when he's drafted in as a replacement keyboardist after meeting the band by chance.

Replicating the experience of journalist and co-screenwriter Jon Ronson – who was similarly recruited last-minute to play back-up keyboards for Frank Sidebottom when he was at college – Gleeson's chirpy Jon is the audience's eyes and

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Band camp: (main, left to right) Clara (Maggie Gyllenhaal), Frank (Michael Fassbender) and Jon (Domhnall Gleeson); (above) the band hang out.

'Abrahamson completely nails the tragedy and madness that comes with musical expression'

ears to this curious, hermetically-sealed universe that he steps gingerly into. Before he knows what's happening, he's off to a rural retreat in Ireland, starting work on the band's album and posting clips on YouTube.

His fellow bandmates, who all view him with either suspicion or disdain, include foul-mouthed theremin player Clara (Maggie Gyllenhaal, in one of the film's few one-note performances); former psychiatric patient Don (the excellent McNairy); French hipster bassist Baraque (François Civil) and the near-silent percussionist Nana (real-life drummer Carla Azar). But it's Frank that Jon is drawn to like a moth to a dazzling flame. "People should know about you," he purrs. "You should be famous."

Command performance

Playing Frank is someone whose star's already risen: Michael Fassbender (who these days probably can't walk down the street without donning a disguise, post-*Prometheus*, *12 Years A Slave* and the *X-Men* films). It's a supreme performance from the Fass, who uses his vocal range and physicality quite brilliantly to bring the character alive. Dressed in a green singlet at one point, recalling (deliberately?) Freddie Mercury's old stage attire, the actor proves ever bit as captivating as the late Queen frontman – from placating German tourists with some Deutsch to singing the band's brooding, ambient tunes. If he suffered any sort of discomfort in the mask, it doesn't show.

Pitched somewhere between Joy Division biopic *Control* and the Coen brothers' recent folkie drama *Inside Llewyn Davis*, Abrahamson completely nails the tragedy and madness that comes with musical expression. But there's also humour. For as weird as *Frank* is – and it is bloody odd – it's also hilarious. Visual gags, like Frank's shower cap or Jon's 'toothbrush-razor', mix with verbal jousting, as Jon convinces the band to take their music to a wider audience and head for a slot at Austin's prestigious SXSW festival.

Taking up most of the film's final third, this plot thread doesn't engage quite as much as preceding scenes. But Abrahamson, along with Ronson and his co-writer Peter Straughan (who also adapted Ronson's similarly idosyncratic *The Men Who Stare At Goats* for the screen), never forget that this journey has an emotional heart. Coupled with Fassbender's moving performance behind the mask, there's tenderness to *Frank*, as well as an authenticity conjured by the beguiling songs written by Abrahmson's regular composer Stephen Rennicks.

Though the disc comes with a so-so extras package (notably two commentaries, with Fassbender conspicuously absent), the movie is anything but run-of-the-mill. *Frank* is the sort of homegrown indie you wish you'd see more of: eccentric, eclectic, thoughtful and just a little bit profound. It'll leave you with a – to borrow from one of Frank's self-described expressions – "Delighted Face." All you have to do it is go with it. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS
> Commentaries
> Featurette
> Deleted scenes

Power outage

Webb's reboot flounders. Spin doctor required?

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN 2 12

Film ★★★ **Extras** N/A

OUT 1 SEPTEMBER DVD, BD, 3D BD

WHEN PETER PARKER WAS delayed at the start of Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man 2*, Joe's Pizza's 29-minute guarantee suffered. When Sony recently announced a two-year delay for the third film in Marc Webb's run, a sense of heightened stakes took hold. *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* leaves no doubt why, even before you factor in disappointing reviews and box-office returns. Webb's second take on Spidey lore is better than cold pizza but it struggles to put a fresh stamp on old material. And with Captain America, the X-Men and a raccoon sucker-punching well above their weight in a rammed summer genre market, this is no time for a superhero heavyweight to drop the ball. Suspicions already simmered around its predecessor's failure to tell the poster-promised "untold story". Webb picks up that plot here, but with unhappy consequences: the Parker-family flashbacks don't half slow the story down. With a lot of forward-flashing also required for the Sinister Six set-ups, it's a wonder the present-day storylines get a look in.

But get a look-in they do, sometimes with winning levity. Rhino (Paul Giamatti) amuses, the web-swinging thrills and Spidey's way with kids get us on side, much aided by a cast on their A-game. Andrew Garfield's expressive Pete, Emma Stone's savvy Gwen Stacy and Sally Field's warm, wise Aunt May charm. Dane DeHaan, meanwhile, nails his Spidey-verse debut as Harry Osborn, oozing the same DiCaprio-turned-sickly charisma that electrified *Kill Your Darlings* and *Chronicle*. And yet... DeHaan's Harry is a trust-fund take on a more emotionally wrought character he played in a sharper (and cheaper) superhero movie, where his turn to villainy packed more punch than his mutation into a Beavis-from-Oz-alike Green Goblin. That wouldn't matter so much if the other villains worked, but Jamie Foxx's Spidey-obsessed Max Dillon is a jittery bag of Nutty Professor-isms and Jim Carrey-version Riddler-isms.

Which might matter less again, if the motives behind Max's mutation into walking power-sulk Electro weren't so under-baked. *Spider-Man 3* was much criticised, but at least Sandman's emotional substance compensated for his elusive biological constitution. *S-M3* spawned a million 'broken web' metaphors for its villain count, which makes the decision to up the character haul here seem brave or reckless. But huge head-counts needn't be crippling: Bryan Singer's *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* showed how to multi-task. Choppy tonal lurches are Webb's bigger problem as he swings between pants-down farce, romance, FX power surges, laundry issues and camp German scientists. Seriously: did anyone even direct Marton Csokas' cameo?

The script has as much trouble focusing the plot. Some *Dark Knight*-style jitters about Spidey's bad influence emerge, then disappear while Gwen and Peter chase their on-off relationship around in circles. Harry and Peter's friendship is detailed in one big info-dump. The tense final bout offers some pay-off, but even then a key

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'This is a sequel hell-bent on delivering what fans want, and deemed lacking last time'

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

BATMAN FOREVER 1995
Jim Carrey's Edward Nygma geeks out over Bruce Wayne. Jamie Foxx's Max takes notes.

SIDEWAYS 2004
Don't mention the Merlot: more wino than Rhino, Paul Giamatti gets his rage on.

CHRONICLE 2012
Dane DeHaan gains great powers, says bollocks to great responsibility. Spiders are tormented.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews

character's emotive, comics-based but slightly cynical, clumsily foreshadowed and arguably misogynist fate makes a mixed impression. A similar tragedy in *The Dark Knight* worked because Nolan rigorously crafted a world of cause and consequence. Webb's tenuous tonal grip doesn't earn its darker turn as it pings about like a sequel hell-bent on delivering what fans want, or at least what fan feedback deemed lacking last time. You're left with a tale of many pleasures but insufficient personality, like a pizza with everything piled on. You don't go hungry, but you may want more finesse next time.

Don't watch the extras before the main feature: the mammoth, multi-part Making Of drops a huge spoiler straight out of the gate. The deleted scenes nod to it too, by way of an emotional reunion that would've been one twist too far. Plus: bonus Felicity Jones. And Electro's mum. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Commentaries** › **Deleted scenes** › **Making Of** › **Music Video**

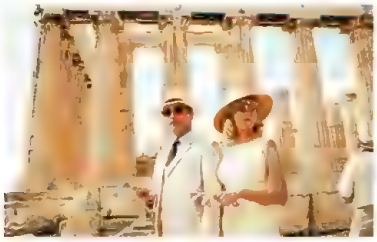
WOLF CREEK 2 18

Film ★★★ Extras ★★★

OUT 15 SEPT DVD, BD

JASON VOORHEES. FREDDIE KRUEGER. Mick Taylor? Maybe the name doesn't quite hit like those other horror icons, but John Jarratt's portrayal of the Outback psycho in Greg McLean's 2005 original was just as memorable. This McLean-directed sequel is effectively a re-tread, only with German tourists and much more gore. There's a switcheroo halfway that may throw you, when Ryan Corr's luckless Brit gets involved, but the finale – a game of 20 questions and a trip to Mick's lair – is enough to give anyone the willies. Worse than seeing Dame Edna in her undies, it's violent, sick and shit-scary. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS
› **Making Of** › **Deleted scenes**



THE TWO FACES OF JANUARY 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

OUT 15 SEPT DVD, BD

ADMIRERS OF ANTHONY MINGHELLA'S adap of *The Talented Mr. Ripley* should find plenty to enjoy in this take on Patricia Highsmith's 1964 novel, a fine-looking tale of conmen and sexual frisson in sun-soaked locales. Viggo Mortensen and Kirsten Dunst impress as the married couple taken in by Oscar Isaac's charming American tour guide in Greece, only to then fight back with some devious plotting of their own. *Drive* screenwriter Hossein Amini, here making his directorial debut, brings some old-fashioned élan, and the three-way poker game remains taut and intriguing throughout. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes** › **Interviews** › **Deleted scenes** › **Bloopers**

ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE 15

Film ★★★★ Extras N/A

OUT 15 SEPT DVD, BD

JIM JARMUSCH'S HYPNOTIC TAKE ON the vampire genre files down the fangs in favour of bohemian ennui and a lustful passion for the arts. Tom Hiddleston and Tilda Swinton are spot-on as centuries-old lovers Adam and Eve, brought together once more to overcome Adam's disillusionment as he laments the slow demise of culture at the hands of "zombies" (ie humans). As he swoons over guitars to crackling vinyl, the vague plot seems to primarily serve Jarmusch's own retro fanaticism, but this dryly witty ode to music and literacy has never made the undead seem so warm-hearted. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS
› **TBC**

NEXT GOAL WINS 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

OUT 1 SEPT DVD

ENGLISH UNDERACHIEVEMENT AT THE World Cup is put into perspective by FIFA's worst football team, American Samoa. Mike Brett and Steve Jamison's doc charts the tiny Pacific island's qualification campaign, as a gruff Dutch coach attempts to transform amateurs into contenders. Premiership prima donnas could learn much from the players' spirit and geniality, while armchair travellers will benefit from the film's window onto a neglected nation, not least its cultural openness to embrace football's first international transgender star. Hollywood hasn't made an underdog sporting movie this funny or surprising in years. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS
› **Commentary** › **Deleted scenes**

Yep, that *is* the big brother from *Home Alone*...

Falling apart

A vagrant vagabond in a vendetta kind of mood...

BLUE RUIN 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

OUT 8 SEPTEMBER DVD, BD

AN AVENGER DISSEMBLES IN director Jeremy Saulnier's grim, gothic thriller, in which a homeless drifter with a bird's-nest beard reinvents himself as an angel of vengeance. Even when he's scrubbed up and clean-shaven, however, Dwight (Macon Blair) is scarcely fit for purpose, his tendency to self-sabotage ensuring his quest for retribution will leave more than a few people pushing up the daisies.

First introduced as a shuffling hobo who lives out of his decrepit turquoise Pontiac – the blue ruin of the title – Dwight is spurred into action when the hillbilly he holds responsible for his parents' deaths is released from prison. One fumbled washroom stabbing later, he pays a visit to his sister to find his victim's redneck rellies are after his blood – a testament to Saulnier's central thesis that violence merely begets violence, particularly in a society where no home is complete without at least one stash of artillery.

Combining the relentless drive of *Blood Simple* with the black humour of *Fargo*, the result is a film of which the Coens would be proud. (Witness the scene in which Dwight tries to dislodge a crossbow bolt from his thigh, the movie's grisliest moment and its funniest.) Yet it is also one steeped in an ineffable sadness: there's little in store for its everyman hero but more pain, more misery and more addled confusion. At the beginning of the story, Dwight is seen taking a bath in a stranger's empty house. In this kind of tale, nobody gets away clean. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Deleted scenes**

SABOTAGE 15

Film ★★★ Extras ★★★

OUT 15 SEPTEMBER DVD, BD

AS MICKEY ROURKE PROVED IN THE *Wrestler*, great comebacks demand career risks. Arnold Schwarzenegger rocks a new look but doesn't act well enough to lose his baggage in David Ayer's chafing hybrid of muscle-man nostalgia and modern indie grit, where elite DEA agents are targeted after scalping $10m in a drug bust. Ayer complicates things with choppy camerawork, salty banter, extreme torture and moral murk, but the testosterone whiff weighs heavy, right up to a daft twist clumsily steered towards indulging brand Arnie. There will be cigars... **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS › **Making Of** › **Deleted scenes**

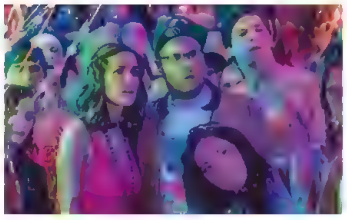
A NEW YORK WINTER'S TALE 12

Film ★★ Extras ★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

"WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?" ASKS Jennifer Connelly midway through Akiva Goldsman's fatuous fantasy. What indeed? Hopping erratically between 1885, 1916 and 2014, the storyline follows Peter Lake (Colin Farrell), who falls for a consumptive beauty (Jessica Brown Findlay) while earning the ire of Russell Crowe's Irish gangster (yes, really). Chuck in a flying horse and a Will Smith cameo, and audiences will need constitutions of iron to stop from gagging. "Shit happens!" rasps Crowe at one point. It really does... **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**



BAD NEIGHBOURS 15

Film ★★★★ Extras TBC

OUT 8 SEPT DVD, BD

ZAC EFRON VERSUS SETH ROGEN may not be the prize fight of the century, but it's one that generates some knockout laughs in Nicholas Stoller's comedy about a suburban couple thrown for a fruit loop when a debauched fraternity moves in next door. Cue all manner of cross-generational hijinks as Efron and Rogen battle to one-up each other with a little help from the latter's wife (Rose Byrne) and some repurposed airbags. Lisa Kudrow pops up as an uncaring dean in a film that's funny enough to mask its malice. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS › **Commentary (BD)** › **Gag reel (BD)** › **Featurettes (BD)** › **Alternative opening (BD)**

ABOUT LAST NIGHT 15

Film ★★★ Extras ★★

OUT NOW DVD

HAVING ALREADY BEEN MADE-OVER as 1986's slick Rob Lowe/Demi Moore romance, it's unsurprising that this new adaptation of David Mamet's play *Sexual Perversity In Chicago* offers even less perversity and isn't set in Chicago. It's essentially two movies – a bawdy farce starring Kevin Hall and Regina Hall, and a winsome romance with Michael Ealy and Joy Bryant – awkwardly combined for chick-flick and bromance demographics. Mamet's caustic dialogue has been defanged, but just enough of his pessimism survives the process to remain interesting. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **Featurettes**

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KILLERS 18

Film ★★★ Extras N/A

OUT 1 SEPT DVD, BD

EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY GARETH Evans, the Mo Brothers' memorably nasty thriller confirms Indonesia's claim to be the new capital of Asian extreme. Although it reunites *The Raid 2* alumni Kazuki Kitamura and Oka Antara, it's relatively light on action, offering instead a two-for-one deal on serial killer and vigilante genres, as a psycho's viral kill-vids inspire a crusading Jakarta journo to take a more direct approach to combating corruption. As an allegory of internet-age moral squalor this is searingly nihilistic but, despite stylish direction and capable cross-cutting, the implausible plot lacks the intelligence to achieve its aspirations as a dark-hearted *Heat*. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS › **TBC**

I REALLY HATE MY JOB 15

Film ★★ Extras ★

OUT 22 SEPTEMBER DVD

MADE BEFORE DIRECTOR OLIVER PARKER turned his attentions to the *St. Trinian's* franchise, this shoestring drama follows one meltdown night in the lives of five women working in an upscale restaurant. By turns unengaging and grating, it's certainly no *Big Night*, though Shirley Henderson gives good sour-faced screech and Neve Campbell provides one of two decent scenes, standing naked to serve the clientele a vitriolic monologue. The late arrival of dinner guest Danny Huston, playing himself, is the other upturn, Parker introducing a spot(light) of magic realism as Huston croons to a golden oldie on the stereo. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › **None**

FOREVER LOVE 15

Film ★★★ Extras ★

OUT 8 SEPT DVD

IT MUST BE A MIXED BLESSING TO have James Franco as your teacher at NYU – on the one hand you get your student films turned into full-blown Hollywood productions (complete with Mila Kunis, Jessica Chastain and Zach Braff cameos), on the other hand you have to have *James Franco* as your teacher – which means he wants to star in them all. Culled from 12 grad school projects interpreting the life of Pulitzer winning poet CW Williams, *Forever Love* (unreleased as *Tar* in 2012) is just as ambitious, pretentious, immature and occasionally interesting as most student films. (But this one is much, much more expensive...) **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **None**

BAREFOOT 15

Film ★★ Extras ★

OUT NOW DVD

REMEMBER THOSE ROMCOMS WHERE Sandra Bullock/Andie MacDowell/Adam Sandler has to convince a stooge to pretend to be his/her finance for a swanky family gathering? Swap the A-list lead for Scott Speedman (*Underworld*) and the "stooge" for a psychiatric patient and you get about half the measure of *Barefoot* – a fluffy, nonsense remake of a better 2005 German film. It would all be harmless enough if it wasn't for Evan Rachel Wood's giddy turn as the sectioned love interest, offensively pitched somewhere between *Splash* and *E.T.* as a fractured abuse victim who's "hilariously" never seen a traffic light, a magnet or a toilet before. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS › **None**

THE LONGEST WEEK 15

Film ★★ Extras ★

OUT 1 SEPT DVD

AS THE MANHATTAN SCION OF A wealthy hotel dynasty, Conrad Valmont (Jason Bateman), has never had to work, so spends his days in his gratis hotel suite plotting his novel, which is thin on substance, derivative and indebted to the works of great New York writers. The same could be said of *The Longest Week*, which looks gorgeous, goes nowhere and plays like the love-child of Woody Allen and Wes Anderson. Quirky music, an arch voiceover, retro production styling and Olivia Wilde's distracting eyeliner all but drown out a love triangle tale between imperious, dislikeable characters that are difficult to empathise with. A little too cool to care for. **Jane Crowther**

EXTRAS › **None**

KILLING SEASON 15

Film ★ Extras ★

OUT NOW DVD

THIRTY-SIX YEARS AGO, WHEN ROBERT De Niro went deer hunting with Christopher Walken, film lovers stopped and stared. Now he's shooting elk with John Travolta, they won't believe their eyes. A crass, badly written, torture-porny two-hander from the director of *Grumpier Old Men*, *Killing Season* casts the two stars as embittered Balkan conflict vets stalking each other through the Appalachians. The chief points of interest are Travolta's extraordinary Serbian accent, and a (metaphorical?) scene in which De Niro pees on his own wounds, while the sole extra – a *Making Of* – lasts all of two minutes 23 seconds. **Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS › **Making Of**

Blu news

More Blu 'Berg and some missing review pieces.

Eight-course Spiel
Just when you thought your Spielberg collection was complete, along comes another boxset. Out 13 October, *The Steven Spielberg Director's Collection* comprises eight films, four of which are new to Blu: small-screen debut *Duel* (the one with the truck), big-screen debut *The Sugarland Express* (the one with Goldie Hawn), *1941* (the one where he botched it) and *Always* (the one people often forget about). Then there's *Jaws*, *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*. All packed into a big rectangular box with a 34-page 'companion book' (like a booklet but fancier) and enough extras to choke a particularly persistent shark.

Sneak Peaks
In our Blu-ray review of *Twin Peaks: The Entire Mystery* (*TF*223) we griped that the extra we wanted most, *The Missing Pieces*, was, um, missing. We've now got our mitts on the feature – a 90-min compilation of long-lost deleted scenes from *Fire Walk With Me* – which works pretty well as a stand-alone in its own elliptical (ie typically Lynchian) way. There's more David Bowie, pop-ins from previously cut cast regulars (hello, Rashida Jones' mum) and a coda to the TV series that offers no great revelations but still tantalises. The money shot, meanwhile, is Sheryl Lee's Laura cracking a truly terrifying, Joker-worthy smile as she eyeballs a possessed ceiling fan.

Spectral delivery

It was the best of slimes, it was the not-so-good of slimes...

GHOSTBUSTERS/GHOSTBUSTERS II PG

Films ★★★★ **Extras** TBC

1984/89 **OUT 1 SEPTEMBER** BD

BACK IN 1984, YOU wouldn't find many adults watching a family film without their families. But that was before a bunch of late-night comedians crossed the demographic streams and accidentally made the Friday night/Sunday teatime movie by which all others are judged. Thirty years on from its record-bustin' box-office reign, if *Ghostbusters* has taught Hollywood anything, it's that you can't make a kids' movie without breaking a few rules.

Not that it started off as a kids' movie at all. Now celebrating another milestone birthday with *another* Blu-ray release – this time re-remastered for 4K sets and re-repackaged with even more special features – it's hard to remember the film's grungy roots in *Saturday Night Live*. Crash-written by Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and director Ivan Reitman in just two weeks, mostly as a vehicle for John Belushi, the whole thing was pitched for $25m as a slacker comedy in the vein of *Caddyshack* and *Stripes* – a bunch of university-dropouts whose made-up day job turns into real work when ghosts start terrorising New York.

When Belushi overdosed on cocaine in 1982, Aykroyd's pet project hit the first roadblock in a notoriously tough shoestring shoot. First he needed a new lead – dragging a drunk, uncooperative Bill Murray through an airport (blasting an air horn at everyone he met) a few days before filming. With most of the workshops in Hollywood busy with *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom* and *Return Of The Jedi*, Reitman had to call in Richard Edlund's start-up FX studio to hand-make all the set-pieces on a ridiculous deadline. The creatures looked like Morph, half the script had to be cut, nine Stay Puft suits went up in flames and, according to Edlund, "the prints were still warm when they went onto the projectors" in June 1984.

Murray mint

Somehow, it worked. With Aykroyd, Murray, Ramis and Reitman all at the top of their game, the years of sketch-show improv paid off as they flew by the seat of their jumpsuits and cobbled together a smart, sarcastic fantasy that was funnier than anything any of them had

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Looking for spooks: (main left to right) Winston Zedmore (Ernie Hudson), Dr. Ray Stantz (Dan Ackroyd), Dr. Peter Venkman (Bill Murray) and Dr. Egon Spengler (Harold Ramis); (above) the Ecto-1 outside the Ghostbusters' base..

'Ghostbusters taught Hollywood that you can't make a kids' movie without breaking a few rules'

done before – and a benchmark for a good deal of what they would do after.

Five years later – still riding high on a wave of cartoons, action figures and crowds *still* singing Ray Parker Jr.'s anthemic title song – they went back to the well, with mixed results. Interviewed a few weeks before the sequel started filming, a miserable Murray was as enthusiastic as ever about the film's chances. "We'll burn in hell if we call it *Ghostbusters II*," he spat. "The ideas they sold me on are no longer in the script. What the hell, even if it's a dog, it's still going to make money..."

He was right. It *did* make money ($215m to the first film's $291m) and it *was* a dog – critically, at least. Offering more of what the kids wanted (slime, Slimer, proper special effects) and less of the late-night charm that appealed to older *SNL* fans, *Ghostbusters II* has always been the younger brother that's trying too hard to please. If it'd had the smarts of, say, *22 Jump Street*, it might have cracked wise about how much it tried to rehash its predecessor's script – but lacking a sense of self-awareness, it comes over as clinging to formula, a walk on the safe side. No wonder Murray thought it didn't feel true to the series' original spirit, which was nothing if not irreverent.

Temper, temper

Still, it's nowhere near as bad as you might remember/have been told. To start off, it has a great premise, picking up with the 'busters five years later as two-bit party clowns while the collective bad temper of late '80s New York turns into a river of pure evil in the sewers. It has a much better bad guy (Vigo the Carpathian, a 16th-Century despot menacingly played by Wilhem von Homburg, also known as the blonde henchman from *Die Hard*), a better foil (Peter MacNicol's museum creep) and much better roles for Ernie Hudson, Rick Moranis and Annie Potts, building successfully on their appearances in the original, rather than just wheeling them back out again as bit-players. What's more, it arguably hides some of the funniest lines in the franchise, with Murray (despite *really* not wanting to be there) at his deadpan best ("You're short, your bellybutton sticks out too far and you're a terrible burden on your poor mother," he says to a baby under threat of supernatural possession.)

Perhaps better appreciated away from any direct comparison to the original, *Ghostbusters II* deserves a second look – it's just a shame that most of its strongest ideas were used five years earlier by one of the best comedies of its time. Unfairly ignored for years, *Ghosbusters II* finally goes hi-def for its big brother's 30th, with long-lost deleted scenes plugging a few narrative leaks that sprung up during the original cut.

With Ramis' sad passing in February putting an end to rumours of another full-blown reunion, *Ghostbusters III* is still, apparently, in the works (with *Bridesmaids*' Paul Feig helming an all-female reboot?).

If there's any lesson for the screenwriters to take from this bumper anniversary party, it's that lightning only strikes twice when you're not trying so hard to get hit. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS

> Featurettes > Deleted scenes/alternative takes > Music videos > Stills gallery

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER 1986
A psycho takes on an apprentice in John McNaughton's grim and chilling masterpiece.

KALIFORNIA 1993
Juliette Lewis portrays another damaged nomad in this lurid look at rednecks gone bad.

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN 2007
Woody Harrelson and Tommy Lee Jones are reunited in the Coen brothers' dark thriller.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews

The new RAC advert is confrontational, to say the least.

Crazies in love

When they met, it was murder...

NATURAL BORN KILLERS: 20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION 18

Film ★★★ **Extras** ★★★★

1994 **OUT 8 SEPTEMBER** BD

IN THE MEDIA CIRCUS OF LIFE THEY were the main attraction!" So ran the tagline for Oliver Stone's incendiary satire, a typically bullish exercise in tabloid-baiting trouble-making that can justly be accused of wallowing in the same excesses it slams. Twenty years on, does it still pack a punch? Or has it been upstaged and out-gored in the interim – not least by Quentin Tarantino, whose *Kill Bill* films put more carnage on screen than Stone could possibly have gotten away with?

Tarantino, of course, was where *Killers* started; it was his screenplay that Stone adapted in the teeth of his fellow director's objections. ("It's not my shit," he would later kvetch. "If you take my script and you fuck it up, I am not cool with that.") Yet there is nary a mention of the *Reservoir Dogs* man in this 20th anniversary reissue, which rather misleadingly implies this story of trailer trash nut-jobs on a killing spree sprang fully formed from Stone's own psyche. (In the *Method In The Madness* featurette, editor Hank Corwin even suggests the movie was "made from the subconscious".)

Such a position no doubt makes sense from a legal standpoint. But it does mean that a crucial piece of the puzzle is missing here, along with the shotgun blast-hole in Robert Downey Jr.'s hand and the decapitated Tommy Lee Jones head Stone reinstated in his director's cut. Other additions from that version – among them Ashley Judd being despatched with a pencil on the witness stand – are saved for a deleted scenes section that comes with an optional Stone intro. There is also the alternative ending in which Woody Harrelson's Mickey and Juliette Lewis' Mallory get their comeuppance – a scene that, if included in the theatrical version, might well have silenced much of the criticism it received on initial release.

Sure, the violence still shocks. Yet it's not half as visceral as Stone's stylistic overkill with its barrage of clashing stocks, disconcerting rear projections and relentless, staccato editing. Not for nothing does co-producer Jane Hamsher – author of 1997's *Killer Instinct*, often considered the definitive *NBK* memoir – call it "the biggest experimental film ever made". Indeed, it is fair to say that few movies since have equalled Stone's sensory assault on the viewer – an effect Jones cannily compares to Picasso's *Guernica* painting in 2001 documentary *Chaos Rising: The Storm Around Natural Born Killers*.

Looking back, said storm now looks like something of the teacup variety. The world has moved on since 1994 – and in truth, it's left *Natural Born Killers* behind. Case in point? Don Murphy, one of its producers, now makes the *Transformers* films. Maybe *NBK* does have something to answer for after all... **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS
› **Alternate ending** › **Commentary** › **Deleted scenes** › **Featurettes** › **Interview**

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FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFE PG

Film ★★ Extras ★★★

1991 **OUT NOW** BD,

JON AVNET'S ODE TO FEMALE empowerment doubles as an Oscar party for Kathy Bates and Jessica Tandy, at the time the two most recent Best Actresses. Their relaxed post-win performances, however charming, symbolise the flaws of an overripe film. The ungainly structure never quite gels Bates' menopausal crisis with Tandy's Southern-fried flashback. The latter – involving murder, racism and lesbian romance – intrigues, but Avnet plays safe with clichéd sentimentality and soporific pacing, squandering the subtexts in Fannie Flagg's source novel. **Simon Kinnear**

EXTRAS
› **Featurettes**

THE SHOUT 15

Film ★★★ Extras ★★★

1978 **OUT 8 SEPT** BD

WINNING A SHARE OF CANNES' GRAND Jury prize in 1978, Polish director Jerzy Skolimowski's bizarre psychological drama sees Alan Bates' mysterious traveller invade the lives of bourgeois Devon couple Susannah York and John Hurt. His party piece? A terrifying 'shout' that he learnt from an Aboriginal shaman that'll kill anyone who hears it. With a cast that includes an early Jim Broadbent spot and a soundtrack from Genesis members Mike Rutherford and Tony Banks, it's oh-so-English in its eccentricities, even if it never quite sustains its shaggy-dog narrative. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS
› **Commentary** › **Original publicity material**
› **Booklet** › **Stills gallery**

FAR AND AWAY 15

Film ★★ Extras ★

1992 **OUT 15 SEPT** BD

LONG BEFORE RON HOWARD MADE racing pic *Rush* and just after Tom Cruise burned rubber in *Days Of Thunder*, the two united to crawl through this slick but fatally slow period confection. Cruise plays a lowly Oirish tenant farmer who heads to America with his landlord's daughter (Nicole Kidman) in pursuit of hope and glory. They find struggle instead – and so do we, as the ponderous pacing and studied gloss stifle the emotions instead of sweeping us away. Kidman and Cruise (husband and wife since *Days Of Thunder*) bicker and brawl energetically enough, but Howard's bloated David Lean-isms sorely lack the 'lean' bit. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS
› **None**

SHOOT THE PIANIST 12

Film ★★★ Extras ★★★

1960 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

IT DOESN'T GET ANY MORE FRENCH NEW Wave than this. François Truffaut's second feature (following the breakout success of *The 400 Blows*) is a fast, loose and often goofy adaptation of David Goodis' crime novel. As ivory-tinkling anti-hero Charlie (Charles Aznavour) gets caught up in a madcap game of mobster cat-and-mouse, we're battered with interior monologues, shoot-outs, extended musical interludes and philosophical musings. While Raoul Coutard's cinematography is tremendous, it's all a bit of a hot mess, switching genres on impulse and stretching credibility to snapping point. Still, when the humour hits, it hits hard. **Josh Winning**

EXTRAS
› **Introduction** › **Commentaries** › **Screen test**

L'ASSASSINO 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

1961 **OUT NOW** Dual Format

RELEASED 13 MONTHS AFTER FELLINI'S *La Dolce Vita*, Elio Petri's *L'Assassino* again casts Marcello Mastroianni as a playboy whose pleasure-rich lifestyle is held to scrutiny. Here he plays Nello Poletti, an antiques dealer arrested on suspicion of murdering his older, richer lover (Micheline Presle), though it's the socio-political laxness of '60s Italy that's essentially on trial. Flashbacks resist answers – Poletti is an unreliable narrator – and Petri refuses to thump out his politicking on a tub. A strong debut from a filmmaker who's often overlooked; be sure to also check out *Hunger Games* prototype *The Tenth Victim*. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS
› **Introduction** › **Documentary** › **Booklet**

KELLY REICHARDT COLLECTION 15

Film ★★★★ Extras ★★★

1994-2010 **OUT NOW** BD

OVER TWO DECADES AND SIX FEATURES, Kelly Reichardt has emerged as a mistress of minimalism whose low-key indies speak volumes to those prepared to listen. This collection contains her three best-known titles (*Old Joy*, *Wendy And Lucy* and the western *Meek's Cutoff*) and also her first (*River Of Grass*), an anti-*Badlands* which takes that movie's essentials (a guy, a girl and a gun), then cleverly subverts them. The rest range from the deceptively slight (*Joy*) and grittily austere (*Cutoff*) to the deeply moving (*Wendy*), with recurring collaborators that suggest a repertory company in the making. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS
› **Interview** › **Making Of** › **Short stories**

The round-up

Stand-offs, slashing and a Scandinavian Sir Sean.

Inspired by Munich's 1972 hostage crisis, **Ransom** (★★★, 1974, out now, DVD, BD) finds Sean Connery's gruff Scandinavian police chief tackle two incidents simultaneously – an Ian McShane-led airplane hijack and a hostage stand-off at an ambassadorial residence. That he manages to handle both without relinquishing his Scottish ark-shent or his fur hat surely constitutes a victory in itself...

The most eastern of Hollywood westerns, John Ford's **Drums Along The Mohawk** (★★★, 1939, out now, DVD) is set during the Revolutionary War, when the frontier was no further west than New York State. Henry Fonda and Claudette Colbert are the newlywed couple setting out to farm in the Mohawk Valley, only to be beset by the war. Stunning to look at, but both stars feel a little detached...

Shot on the fly at the 1981 Cannes Film Festival, **The Last Horror Film** (★★★, 1982, out now, BD) is a daft murder mystery that sees wannabe director Joe Spinell stalking a scream queen. Dubbing? Dodgy. Soundtrack? Awful. But it's gleefully splattery, and the inclusion of the *Maniac 2* promo makes it a must-have for video-nasty fans...

Dario Argento protégé Michele Soavi is one of horror's great could've-beens, who quit features to care for his dying son. His inventive theatre-based slasher **Stage Fright** (★★★, 1987, out 15 Sept, BD) charts the backstage backstabbing with flair and black humour.

TV

Playing a Blinder

On the set of the BBC's Brummie gangster saga...

THE ROUNDTHORN industrial estate in Greater Manchester may not be the most glamorous location *Lounge* has ever travelled to. But then appearances can be deceptive – something that quickly becomes apparent as we're guided into a drab warehouse-cum-studio that's the current home of *Peaky Blinders*, the BBC's compelling, Birmingham-set gangster drama dubbed "the British *Boardwalk Empire*" by wowed critics last year.

Season 1 of the show – named after a post-WWI Brummie gang that got their nickname by concealing razor blades in their peaked caps – concluded with a *High Noon*-style stand-off between Thomas Shelby (Cillian Murphy) and cocky Cockney Billy Kimber (Charlie Creed-Miles). Season 2 is another matter though. "This is much more about [*Tommy*] building his empire," says incoming producer Laurie Borg. "*The Godfather* syndrome."

Borg's not kidding. Just behind a wall is the set for The Garrison, the Small Heath boozer where Shelby and his family rule the roost. Once a scruffy watering hole, it's now opulently blinged out in gold leaf, plush reds and sparkly chandeliers. Has The Garrison gone all gastro? "A gastro pub that serves kneecappings," grunts Murphy when we meet him in his trailer.

It's as if Tommy has been to London, soaked up the fashions of the metropolis and hired Jay-Z as his interior designer. "He wants to make a big statement," nods Grant Montgomery, the show's production designer. "It's like *Scarface*. Gold is this aspirational item for Tommy. The original Garrison was an antiquated gold, so this is like a new gold – [*we*] actually named [*it*] 'Peaky gold'. It's a statement of intent."

> 'The show has really stepped up. You want to be better'
> **CILLIAN MURPHY**

Quicker and slicker

The Garrison's facelift is just scratching the surface of a season that begins in 1922, three years on from its predecessor. Creator Steven Knight, who last year wrote just two episodes, has penned all six installments this time around, all of which are being directed by *Sherlock*'s Colm McCarthy. "Having established it last year, you feel now [*Knight*] just eats through the plot," explains Helen McCrory, back as Aunt Polly, the

REX

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The boys are back: (mai centre) Tommy Shelby (Cil Murphy) and his gang return; (below) getting ready for a shot.

Shelbys' tough-hided matriarch. "It's a lot more complex and a lot quicker."

Murphy concurs. "Everyone is confident we've achieved a level," he says, twisting his red cufflinks. "But you go into the second season going, 'We have to better that on every level.' The show has really stepped up." Never mind the cinematic ambitions of the original with its vivid recreation of Birmingham in 1919: the new season promises to expand in a way Tommy would surely appreciate. "You just do want to exceed expectations," Murphy continues. "You want to be better."

If anything suggests this, it's the new additions to the cast. Noah Taylor, fresh from *Game Of Thrones*, plays the head of a gang that looks set to call a halt to the Shelbys' expansion plans, while Charlotte Riley (*Edge Of Tomorrow*) plays an aristocrat who crosses Tommy's path. And then there's Riley's real-life fiancé Tom Hardy, reuniting with Knight after their taut low-budgeter *Locke*. It's a huge coup for the show to snag such a prestigious guest star, especially one who hasn't had time for small screen fare since 2009's *The Take*.

"It's quite a creation he's come up with," smiles Murphy, who worked with Hardy on *Inception* and (briefly) *The Dark Knight Rises*. "Between Tom and Noah Taylor, we've got two great opponents for Tommy this year." Other newcomers include Harry Kirton, a Birmingham schoolboy who beat hundreds of others at an open casting to win the role of Finn Shelby, the youngest of the clan. Then there's Finn Cole – Joe Cole's younger brother – as Michael, a long-lost Shelby relative.

A family affair

"The moment when Tommy comes and finds Michael, he's intrigued at what's going on," says Cole, who won his role after petitioning his footballer sibling to film him in character on an iPhone. "There's something being hidden, and he knows what they're about from day one. The family he's been living with are very different to the family he actually belongs to, and that's what he's been looking for his whole life."

According to McCrory, the second season will also become more female-centric and give her character a particular emotional through-line. "It's still a very male-dominated world," says the British actress. "But the women are brought much more into the forefront." Planned as well is a shift away from the first season's western-themed showdowns. "It becomes much more entangled in gangster mythology," says Montgomery, who reveals he decked out one club with a scorpion motif in a nod to Ryan Gosling's jacket from *Drive*.

As extras in 1920s garb drift about the studio, there's a palpable excitement around the place as the show nears the midway point of its 14-week shoot. "That's the thing about the second series," explains Borg. "These actors understand their characters and the world they're inhabiting, and they can come in being much more brave." Borg gets up to leave, but not before whetting *Lounge*'s appetite one last time. "You'll leave this series on such an incredible high," he says, "with an ending that is tumultuous." Now that's the way to cap a show. **James Mottram**

> ***Peaky Blinders* returns to BBC2 later this year.**

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

THE GODFATHER: PART II 1974
Al Pacino seeks to expand his empire in a way that would make even Tommy Shelby quake in his boots.

LOCKE 2013
Steven Knight and Tom Hardy's first collaboration sees the latter on the road to hell. Well, the M1 anyway.

PEAKY BLINDERS 2013
Razor blades at the ready? Good. For the first time in its history, Birmingham just got cool.

Broadcast news...

All the big events in tellyland on air, and off.

GRATEFUL UNDEAD
One of the many revelations to spring from this year's Comic-Con was the news that Sam Raimi is writing an *Evil Dead* TV series with brother Ivan, and that Bruce Campbell is set to star. Given that Sam is also producing videogame adap *The Last Of Us*, it might be some way off. Still, an *Evil Dead* TV show sounds groovy to us.

DEVILS DUE
"Demons are the new zombies!" tweeted Robert Kirkman upon the news that Cinemax will be making a series out of his comic book *Outcast*. *The Walking Dead* writer's latest venture focuses on Kyle, whose family deals with demonic possessions. Kirkman's also developing a *TWD* spin-off *and* an AMC pilot based on another of his comic books, *Thief Of Thieves*.

JEONG AT HEART
Ken Jeong, of *Community* and *The Hangover* fame, is starring in a new pilot – as himself. *Ken Jeong Made Me Do It* follows a guy who crashes into Jeong's car, to find the comedian becoming his mentor. If picked up, the MTV series is not expected to interfere with *Community*.

ANIMAL MAGIC
Fans of *Manimal* – the 1983 cheese-athon in which Simon MacCorkindale played a crime fighter who could turn into animals – will be intrigued to hear that Will Ferrell and Adam McKay are working on a film version. "I know it will be funny and entertaining, but will it be the first film to win a Pulitzer?" asks McKay.

In cold blood

Bilbo's bleak midwinter...

FARGO: SEASON 1 15 TBC

Show ★★★★ **Extras** N/A

2014 **OUT 22 SEPTEMBER** DVD, BD

WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED IN 2012 that a television series based on the Coen brothers' 1996 double Oscar-winning movie was in development, the collective reaction was a hiss of disgust. Adapting or sequelising films for TV is nothing new, of course, but the Coens have always existed in their own, instantly recognisable universe, their signature style and sensibilities impossible to replicate.

Two years, 10 episodes and several awards later, the global hiss has turned to whimpers of delight. Where series creator Noah Hawley scores big is in his decision to tell a fresh crime story with new characters, time period and setting (the Minnesotan town of Bemidji, filmed in Calgary), and to skillfully reproduce flavours of the film – viewers will recognise dialect, character traits, humour, violence, themes and even occasional plot points – but it's like everything's been fed through a woodchipper for Hawley to then stamp his own blood-red footprints across the snowscapes.

Set in 2006, nearly 20 years on, *Fargo* 2.0 opens with put-upon insurance salesman Lester Nygaard (Martin Freeman) being henpecked at home, humiliated by his old high-school bully in the street and generally inept at work. Then fate intervenes, with Lester bumping into menacing drifter Lorne Malvo (Billy Bob Thornton) in an emergency room and nervously agreeing that he'd like to see his old tormentor receive a good dose of comeuppance. In a plot development reminiscent of Hitchcock's *Strangers On A Train*, Lester is then shocked to hear of the bully's death and finds himself inextricably linked to Malvo – more so after he snaps at home, hammers his overbearing wife to death and is reliant on his new friend to clean up the mess.

And that's just episode one. Over nine more, Hawley escalates events, tightens the noose and painstakingly develops his characters: Lester gets smarter, more self-assured and cold-blooded (and Freeman improves as he sheds some of his "You betcha" ineffectuality); Malvo spreads his wings until his angel of death rivals Anton Chigurh in *No Country For Old Men*; Duluth police officer Gus Grimly (Colin Hanks) brings heart to the investigation; hired hitmen Russell Harvard and Adam Goldberg stand in for the Coens' kidnappers; and Deputy Molly Solverson (Allison Tolman) proves every bit as big-hearted, persistent and endearing as Frances McDormand's Marge Gunderson.

Fargo grows as it unfurls, with novelist Hawley bringing an increasingly organic quality to the action as he refuses to plot his twists to cater for ad-breaks and cliffhangers. The finale is satisfying but leaves us wanting more – a second season has been greenlit to begin shooting in January, with Hawley promising to take us back to Sioux Falls in 1979 for another loosely-connected tale of "hate and evil". **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS
› TBC

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS 2006-2011
Billy Bob played the football coach in the 2004 movie. The TV show benefited from having a bigger field to play on.

BREAKING BAD 2008-2013
(Walter) White turns to black. But could Heisenberg have dealt with the evil that is Lorne Malvo?

TRUE DETECTIVE 2013-
Cops and killers. The Frontrunner to fill the *Breaking Bad* void, but jeez, *Fargo* runs it close.

For full reviews of these films visit totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews

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Work ace

Steve Carell quips the day job...

THE OFFICE – AN AMERICAN WORKPLACE: SEASONS 1-9 TBC

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★

2014 **OUT 15 SEPTEMBER** DVD, BD

FAWLTY TOWERS, THE *Inbetweeners*, even *Dad's Army*... There aren't many classic Brit-coms that haven't suffered a rubbish American remake. But you can be as territorial as you like about Ricky Gervais' 2001 mockumentary *The Office* – sooner or later, you'll still have to admit that the US version is better.

The first season dumps the formula over the pond without much finesse – Steve Carell playing a tweaked version of Gervais' middle manager who thinks he's everything that he's not (funny, hip, and loved by his employees). The stock start mirrors a patchy end, but the bulk of *The Office*'s nine-season run remains the funniest, sweetest, best written comedy on television.

Rarely leaving the confines of the workplace (and never losing their head to all the Emmys and A-listers they pick up along the way), the tight-knit cast keep things grounded in sharp improv and genuine chemistry, anchored by Rainn Wilson's *Battlestar Galactica*-obsessed Dwight, John Krasinki and Jenna Fisher's lovelorn Jim and Pam, and Carell's Michael Scott – an unstoppable force of embarrassment, pathos and dad jokes who turns cringe comedy into heartache with a single look to camera.

Joss Whedon, JJ Abrams, Harold Ramis and more all queued up to guest direct, and the likes of *Modern Family* and *Parks And Recreation* were born in its wake, but the real impact of *The Office* is still in the watching. Impossible not to box-set binge without laughing, crying and falling in love with every character – as soon as it's over, you'll need it back. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS
› Deleted scenes › Gag reels › Commentaries

ELEMENTARY: SEASON 2 15

Show ★★★★ Extras N/A

2014 **OUT NOW** DVD

ANOTHER 24 EPISODES OF THE HIT CBS show, with Jonny Lee Miller's modern-day Sherlock Holmes and Lucy Liu's sober Joan Watson proving invaluable consultants to Aidan Quinn's Captain Gregson of the NYPD's 11th precinct. As with S1, the quality fluctuates wildly, but the characters' interplay is a joy, rivalling Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman in the BBC's *Sherlock*. This season also sees Rhys Ifans' Mycroft step to the fore, providing a love/hate triangle that peaks in season closer 'The Grand Experiment'. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS › TBC

HOMELAND: SEASON 3 TBC

Show ★★★ Extras N/A

2014 **OUT 8 SEPTEMBER** DVD, BD

NEVER MIND 'SECOND ALBUM syndrome', this third season struggles where previously it soared. Following the attack that ended the last series, the big problem here is that the tension between Marine-turned-suspected terrorist Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis) and CIA officer Carrie Mathison (Claire Danes) has evaporated – with Brody out the picture for at least half a season. But, concluding with a daring and dramatic twist that'll either sink or swim the upcoming fourth series, you can't say creators Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa lack balls. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › TBC

THE BIG BANG THEORY: SEASON 7 TBC

Show ★★★★ Extras N/A

2014 **OUT 8 SEPTEMBER** DVD, BD

'CONSISTENCY' HAS ALWAYS BEEN the watchword with *The Big Bang Theory* and S7 is no different, as Leonard (Johnny Galecki), Sheldon (Jim Parsons) and the rest of the gang continue to boldly go where no geek has gone before. Highlights include Amy's discovery of a flaw in *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, Sheldon's hook-up with James Earl Jones and Penny's role in 'Serial Ape-ist 2'. Deftly evolving the relationship dramas – the lonely Raj even gets a look-in – fans will be sated, while there's enough for newbies to, ahem, Klingon to. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS › TBC

THE WALKING DEAD: SEASON 4 TBC

Show ★★★ Extras N/A

2014 **OUT 8 SEPTEMBER** DVD, BD

THE WALKING DEAD IS AN ERRATIC beast. Season 1 started strong before stumbling, while Season 2 fell face-first into a cowpat before Season 3 regained some of the early tenacity. Thankfully, Season Four is more consistent, finally feeling like the show comic-collectors have been hankering after. Which isn't to say it hits the ground groaning – but from the moment a fan-favourite villain returns it's a triumph, building to a duo of lunatic finales (one mid-season) that'll have horror geeks and telly addicts alike clamouring for more (gore). **Sam Ashurst**

EXTRAS › TBC

GAMES

Simply the beast

Ten reasons why Alien: Isolation will be the best Alien game yet...

1. It's all about Ridley Scott

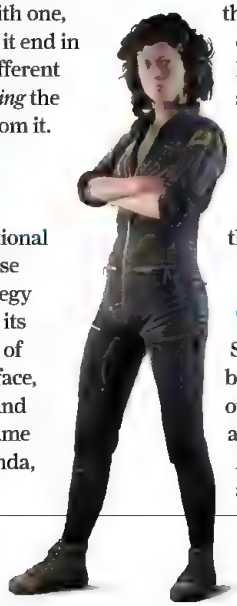
Note the singular: *Alien*. For years, games have been drawn to the explosive action beats and space-marine bravado of James Cameron's 1986 sequel, and *Aliens* has influenced games from *Halo* to *Dead Space*. But, somehow, it never made for a good game itself. And that's why *Isolation* is trying something new, returning to the 1979 source and excavating everything from the white-panelled corridors to the drinking-bird toy seen at the start of the film. This game is about precision and terror, rather than hardware and bodycount.

2. There's only one alien

...is not only what the terraces would chant if the xenomorph turned pro, but also a numerical truth about *Isolation*. Again, it's the legacy of Scott's film, but it also has deep significance for the type of gameplay we can expect. When aliens come pouring from the walls there's an inflationary effect which lessens the individual threat posed by the supposedly perfect killing machine. Stick with one, and make every encounter with it end in certain death, and you have a different prospect. *Isolation* isn't about *facing* the alien, it's about running away from it.

3. Amanda Ripley

This is a cautious bit of reasoning, because finding a fictional entry point into the *Alien* universe hasn't always been a smart strategy (see: *Aliens: Colonial Marines* and its muddy fan-service resurrection of Corporal Hicks). But on the surface, at least, this is less contentious and more elegant. The hero of the game is Ellen Ripley's daughter, Amanda, who's followed her missing mother's footsteps to become an engineer and who, 15 years after the events of Scott's film, has a chance to join the search for the missing *Nostromo*. The set-up has two things going for it. Being slightly cynical, it gives us a lead a lot like Ellen Ripley in everything from sex, physique, skills, and even shoes. And, more hopefully, it explores a relationship that the films never could, despite the riffs on maternity that run through the series.



4. There's a motion scanner

So all the best rules need to be broken at least once, and the rule of setting *Isolation* in the cold, atmospheric world of Ridley Scott's *Alien* is broken here, with the addition of the motion tracker

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'Isolation isn't about facing the alien, it's about running away from it...'

from *Aliens*. It's forgivable, though, not least because this tracker (an earlier version of the military tech we see in Cameron's film) has the chunky analogue feel of Scott's universe, but also because it aids the game in recreating the tension and terror of *Alien*. In a game where one-on-one encounters end in death, the motion tracker is Amanda's electronic eyes and ears.

5. It's made in England

Though the crew of the *Nostromo* were mostly American, the Britishness of Scott and the production base at Shepperton Studios has always somehow bled through the sides of the frame to make *Alien* seem peculiarly British. It feels right therefore that *Isolation* is entirely homegrown, coming out of Horsham-based UK studio Creative Assembly – a team who simply *get* the fuzzy low-fi world which proved such an effective conductor for the terror of the alien.

6. It looks and sounds like Alien

What's helping Creative Assembly recreate the feel of Scott's film is deep access to Fox's archives. Everything from unlabelled sound reels of Shepperton sound crews creating the film's distinctive SFX to blueprints of set designs recording the measurements of interiors and doorways are helping Creative Assembly to accurately re-assemble *Alien* on a micro level.

7. Sigourney Weaver's back

Let's be honest here – Sigourney Weaver returning for a pair of bonus missions is a coup for the marketing department at Sega and Fox. But Weaver also says no to a lot of things. In other words, we can all take something warm and reassuring away from the fact this astute, highly intelligent player in the *Alien* universe thinks *Isolation* is worth getting involved with. And *then* we can all play the missions set on the original *Nostromo* and freak the heck out.

8. ...and so is the rest of the crew of the Nostromo

Just as important as Weaver's presence to those who admire the spirit of the original film is the fact that almost the entire crew of the *Nostromo* (except Ian Holm), from Yaphet Kotto to Harry Dean Stanton, is back on board. They are a beautifully shaded bunch, believable human beings thrown against an unbelievable horror, and their quiet authenticity is just as important as Ripley's star power.

9. There's a virtual reality version that's too scary too play

At E3 this year Sega showed off a prototype demo of *Isolation* on VR gaming platform Oculus Rift. The demo was a perfect fit for the game's detailed atmospherics and stalking gameplay, to the point where many journalists at the show were so scared of encountering the alien they quit the demo rather than face the beast. Shame it's just a prototype... for now.

10. Because this is Alien...

...and there's so much quality, detail and rich tension in the source material – so much *potential* – that basically all you need to do is not screw it up. Which is much harder than it sounds, obviously – but Creative Assembly has made smart decisions, has respected the original work, and seems to be working hard to create an interactive framework through which everything that makes *Alien* so distinctive and memorable can shine.

Nathan Ditum

› ***Alien: Isolation*** **will be released across all platforms on 7 October.**

GAME OVER, MAN!

Alien games: the good, the bad, the fugly...

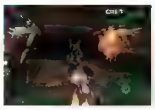
Alien (1982)
The first tie-in, released for the Atari 2600, was a *Pac-Man* clone featuring xenomorphs instead of ghosts and flamethrowers instead of power pills. It's fair to say the hardware wasn't quite capable of doing the film justice...

Aliens (1986)
Released alongside the movie on the Commodore 64 and ZX Spectrum, Activision did a fine job of recreating scenes from the movie using a multi-screen set-up to capture the tension of the marines' first encounter.

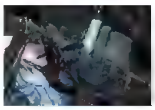
Aliens (1990)
A typically blaring and tasteless early '90s arcade shooter. It's basically a constant chaos of gunfire and screeching through which you flamethrower your way through endless waves of aliens to a power-loader final boss fight.

Alien 3 (1992)
A high point for *Alien* games just as the films reached a low. *Alien 3* was a 2D Amiga side-scroller with a smart mix of exploration and platform gameplay – and a shaven-headed Ripley who looked distinctive and badass even in blocky 16-bit form.

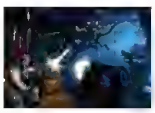
Alien Vs Predator (1994)
One of the earliest *Predator* crossovers was this side-scrolling beat 'em up from Capcom – based on an early script for a film adaptation that never got made. It's basically *Final Fight* with aliens instead of street toughs.



Alien Trilogy (1996)
Trilogy was released for the original PlayStation and took serious liberties with the films' storyline in order to cram everything into a single, *Doom*-style first-person shooter. Scores extra points for spraying you with acid if you shotgun an alien at close range.



Aliens Vs Predator (1999)
A stylish classic from UK-based Rebellion which offered separate campaigns for marines, aliens and predators, each with unique abilities and play styles. A recent remake from 2010 for PS3 and Xbox failed to live up to the original.



Aliens: Colonial Marines (2013)
A full-on fiasco, with protracted development resulting in a dated, patchwork attempt to bridge *Aliens* and *Alien 3*. Even the return of Michael Biehn as Hicks can't compensate for a convoluted plot and deeply average action.

ON DEMAND

School-y September

Our pick of the films and shows to download or stream.

IF "I LOVE YOU" ARE THE three greatest words in the world, then every under-16 knows the three worst: Back. To. School. Today it's our mission to cheer up the kids with reminders of just how much worse it could be. Just imagine if you were dumped into the ultimate P.E. nightmare: ***The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*** (2013, Virgin Movies/Netflix, ★★★★). Effectively a bigger, baboon-ier re-do of the original, without the motion-sickness camerawork. Costuming's a winner too: everyone's either dressed amazingly or not at all. Jennifer Lawrence may now look as 'teenaged' as the cast of *Grease*, but the kids in the intergalactic ***Ender's Game*** (2013, Netflix, ★★★) still look proper baby-faced, making the military-training premise all the queasier. Impressively solemn, there's but a single giggle: Harrison Ford floating about in a beret like a zero-gravity Frank Spencer. More sci-fi nightmares await in ***TRON: Legacy*** (2010, Virgin Movies, ★★★), where a kid grows up without his game-designer dad, only to find the old man's been hoovered up the back of an arcade machine and has just been sat growing a beard for 20 years. Or maybe he's pondering the ultimate mystery: despite having a heart of pixels and fist-chewing dialogue ("Tell me about the sun." "It's warm."), there's still something cool about the *TRON* movies. Let us leave the world of neon trousers for the olde lands of ***Brave*** (2012, Netflix, ★★★), where it's crap being Merida, a medieval Katniss about to be frogmarched up the aisle by her parents. Cue rebellion and a twist thieved from *Brother Bear*, but done better. There's more teenaged betrothal bother in ***Pocahontas*** (1995, ★★★★, Amazon Prime Instant Video), which turned raccoons into action stars long before *Guardians Of The Galaxy*. There's also 90 per cent less rolling around in long grass than Terrence Malick's *The New World*. Back to the present, and everything from the Xbox to the cutlery drawer's got a (murderous) mind of its own in ***Paranormal Activity 4*** (2012, ★★★, Netflix), as the stay-at-home demon starts hounding young 'uns. See kids? You're much better off staying in school, where you can at least *see* the evil teachers trying to ruin your life.

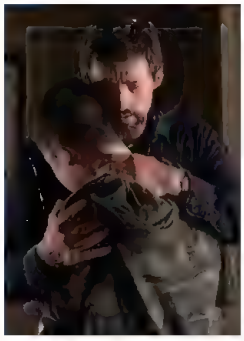
DOCTOR WHO: SERIES 7 PG

★★★★ 2012-13

AVAILABLE FROM 1 SEP

Available on Amazon Prime Instant Video

S7 of new-*Who* racks up the turning points: the departure of companions Arthur Darvill and Karen Gillan, the arrival of Jenna Coleman and, of course, Matt Smith's final wave of the sonic screwdriver. A trip to the Wild West flags the show's ambitions; we've come a long way from cardboard sets. Plus: Daleks, dinosaurs, Cybermen, snowmen, Mitchell *and* Webb.



PRISONERS 15

★★★★ 2013 **AVAILABLE FROM 1 SEP**

Available on Amazon Prime Instant Video

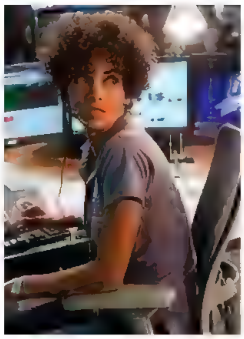
Keller Dover? Detective Loki? Thankfully, character names are as silly as it gets in Denis Villeneuve's emotionally taxing thriller. Dover is a never-angrier Hugh Jackman, snatching the law out of Loki's (Jake Gyllenhaal, keeping his 'cop with personal demons' on a subtle leash) hands when his daughter goes AWOL. Taut start, sloggy middle act, then it fights back strong with a final round of reversals and revelations.

SIN CITY 18

★★★★ 2005 **AVAILABLE FROM 1 SEP**

Available on Virgin Movies

By the time you read this, the sequel will be tearing up cinemas, nine years after its still-fresh forerunner made set-builders fear for their livelihoods. Unlike a lot of 'digital backlot' cinema, this never leaves its actors adrift; bruiser Mickey Rourke looks positively at home. A tsunami of style, it even reinvents cinematic blood, turning it into a cross between a Jackson Pollock painting and a pigeon 'accident'.



THE CALL 15

★★★ 2013 **AVAILABLE FROM 5 SEP**

Available on Sky Movies On Demand

It's a big ask, admittedly, but if you can ignore the jarring, off-the-rails, bad-taste-in-the-mouth ending, this is actually pretty good. Halle Berry's the 911 operator needing some redemption when, as luck would have it, she fields a call from car-napped Abigail Breslin. Brad Anderson (*The Machinist*) tightens the two-hander tension to the point where, alas, it snaps, but the first hour at least will have you whimpering.

AMERICAN HUSTLE 15

★★★★ 2013 **AVAILABLE FROM 19 SEP**

Available on Sky Movies On Demand

Despite a late surge in this year's awards race – to the point where it was between this, *12 Years A Slave* and *Gravity* for Best Picture – it was a case of hair today, gone tomorrow at the Oscars. Never mind: like Jeremy Renner's quiff, David O. Russell's con caper will stand up in years to come thanks to its controlled chaos, bulb-busting star wattage and the best dressing-up box in town.

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TOTAL FILM competition

WIN! AN ACTION MOVIE BUNDLE WITH SABOTAGE!

OUT TO OWN FROM 15 SEPTEMBER

He's been the biggest action star on the planet for over 30 years. He went away for a bit, but then he came back, back, back – and now he's heading up the most explosive movie in a career chocka with explosive movies. Arnold Schwarzenegger stars in Sabotage as the commander of an elite but volatile DEA task force. After a raid on a drug cartel's mansion, the Austrian Oak and his team of rogue agents stash $10m for themselves. Returning later to pick up the dough, they find it AWOL... and so the mayhem begins. Someone's taking out the agents one by one – but who?

Find out when this relentlessly spectacular actioner hits Blu-ray, DVD and digital platforms on 15 September, directed by David Ayer (*End Of Watch*) and featuring all-star support from Sam Worthington, Joe Manganiello (*Magic Mike*), Josh Holloway (*Lost*), Terence Howard (*Iron Man*), Mirelle Enos (*World War Z*) and Olivia Williams (*Hanna*).

To celebrate the release, we've teamed up with Lionsgate Home Entertainment to offer one lucky reader a bulging bundle of action movies – including, of course, *Sabotage*. Five runners-up will receive the movie on Blu-ray. For a chance to win, head to www.totalfilm.com/competition and answer the question below:

Which of these is NOT an Arnie character?

A *Dutch*
B *Trench*
C *Rocket*

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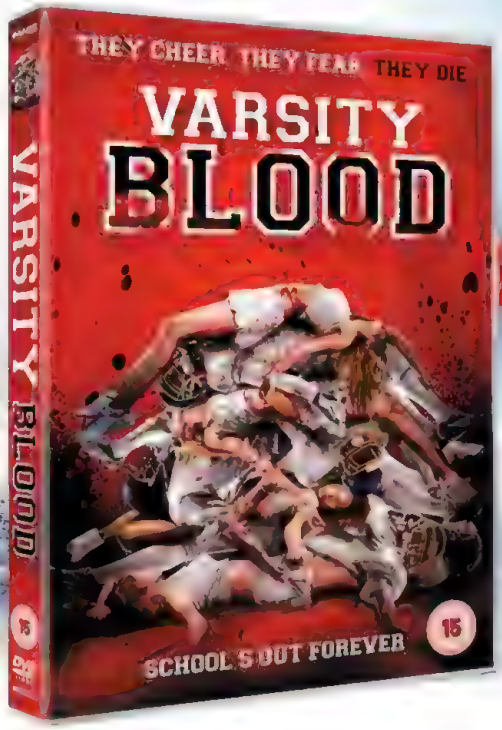
★★★★
"A BLOODY, FUN-PACKED, GLORIOUSLY DEMENTED SLASHER"
BILLY CHAINSAW, BIZARRE MAGAZINE



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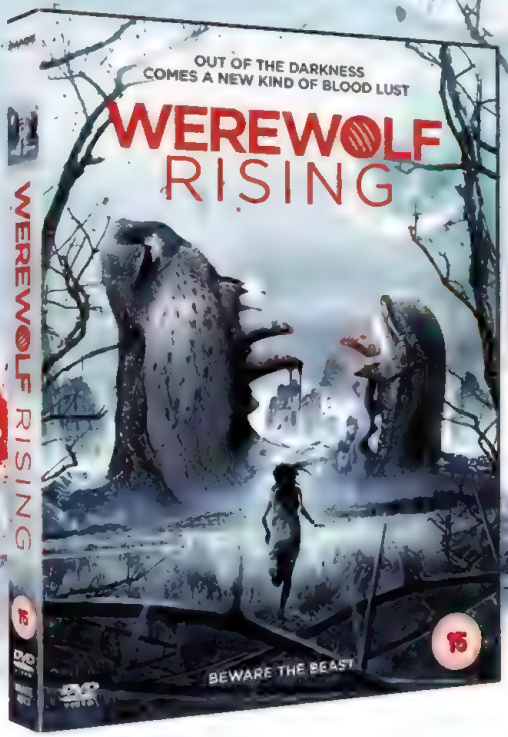

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Classic characters: (l-r) The Scarecrow, Dorothy and The Tin Man.

Bricking it

THE WIZARD OF OZ | Dorothy meets the Munchkins..

RIPPED FROM REALITY BY A TORNADO, Dorothy Gale (Judy Garland) and her dog, Toto, emerge from their monochrome home into Oz, an over-the-rainbow-hued wonderland. Here they encounter Munchkins, magic and all sorts of self-acceptance metaphors. "Toto," observes Dorothy sagely, "I've a feeling we're not in Kansas any more..."

1 Marvelling at the Technicolor trippiness of Munchkinland, Dorothy walks through the empty village, failing to notice the Wonka-esque flowers moving behind her, and tiny watchers emerging from the foliage.

2 Glinda (Billie Burke), the Good Witch Of The North, appears in a giant bubble, explaining that Dorothy has killed the Wicked Witch Of The East, freeing Munchkinland from tyranny.

3 Giggling, the Munchkins flock round to "meet the young lady who fell from a star". They gather in the town centre, thanking Dorothy, singing, and forming a procession.

4 Munchkinland's mayor (Charlie Becker) and various diminutive dignitaries pronounce the witch "not only merely dead" but "really, most sincerely dead". "Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead!" spreads the word, until...

5 The Wicked Witch Of The West (Margaret Hamilton) appears. "She's worse than the other one," explains Glinda. Despite Westie's threats, Dorothy wins Eastie's ruby slippers and a new enemy.

6 The witches vanish, leaving Dorothy with some iconic instructions as to how she might get to Oz: follow the yellow brick road. Cue another helium-pitched show-stopper. **Matt Glasby**

***The Wizard Of Oz* is available now on DVD and Blu-ray.**

THE DEVELOPMENT
L. Frank Baum's novel *The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz* (1900) was adapted many times for stage and screen before Mervyn LeRoy's 1939 version, greenlit by MGM after the success of Disney's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarves* (1937). It took five directors and 14 writers to finish. "I wanted my two little girls to see a picture that searched for beauty and decency and sweetness and love," explained main helmer Victor Fleming.

THE DISAPPEARANCE
Amid SFX pyrotechnics, Hamilton exited through the floor on a little elevator. On the second take, a mistimed explosion severely burnt her face and hands. Make-up artist Jack Young quickly scrubbed off her copper-based make-up, telling her, "If I didn't get that off it would've gone on eating into your face." Fearing she'd never work again, Hamilton didn't sue, returning to work on one condition: "No more fireworks!" The filmmakers used the first take.

THE ACCIDENTS
Original Tin Man Buddy Ebsen suffered an allergic reaction to the aluminum dust used in his costume and nearly died. A Flying Monkey was dropped, and Margaret Hamilton's stunt double was hospitalised by an exploding broom. However, the rumour that a suicidal Munchkin can be seen hanging from a tree in a later sequence is just movie myth. It was an exotic bird borrowed for the shoot.

THE SLIPPERS
In the original novel, Dorothy's slippers were silver. The change to ruby was to take advantage of how striking red looked in Technicolor. The jewels were actually sequins – 2,300 per shoe – and there was felt on the bottom to deaden the sound when Garland danced. A surviving pair, estimated to be worth $2m, is now owned by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

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THE ACTRESSES
Child star Shirley Temple was pursued for the main role, but her voice wasn't strong enough. Instead 16-year-old Frances Gumm – AKA Judy Garland – graduated to the big time, losing weight and wearing a corset to hide her curves. Toto was a female terrier named Terry, who had acted alongside Temple in *Bright Eyes* (1934). Garland tried to adopt Terry after the shoot, but her trainer refused.

THE WITCHES
Slinky sex symbol Gale Sondergaard was in the frame to play the Wicked Witch Of The West but refused to be uglied up. When Margaret Hamilton heard she had been cast, she asked her agent which part. "The witch," he answered. "What else?" Despite playing an old hag, Hamilton was 36, while Burke was 54 when she played Glinda.

THE SHOOT
Filming lasted six months, with actors working six days a week in uncomfortable conditions. Hamilton's toxic make-up meant she couldn't eat solid food at all on set. Barring the opening shots of rolling clouds, the entire film was shot on a set, but the Technicolor process required so many lights that temperatures rose to over 37°C. Jack Haley (the onscreen Tin Man) complained: "It was not fun. Like hell it was fun!"

THE MUNCHKINS
Hailing from all over the country, 124 people of restricted growth were cast as Munchkins, with children padding out the numbers. All of them were dubbed except the two who thank Dorothy for killing the witch "so completely". Recalls Munchkin Jerry Maren: "I'd never seen another little man or woman in my life before then. It was really exciting. Man, they're all over the place!" But the rumours of their on-set drinking and debauchery were greatly exaggerated – by Garland, among others. "They were drunks!" she liked to joke.

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON PICKERSGILL/ACUTE GRAPHICS

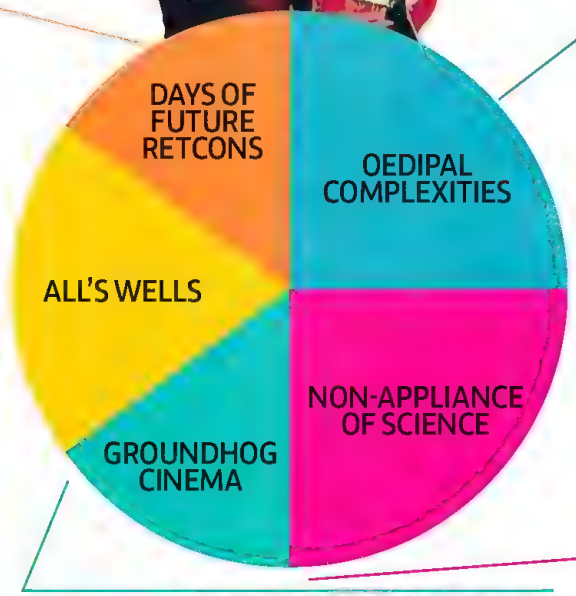
INSTANT EXPERT

Time-travel movies

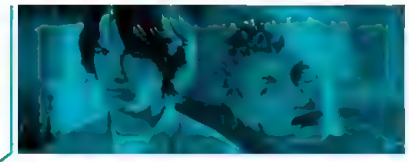
Where we're going, we don't need roads. We need, um, words.

Want to reboot a franchise? Don't want to chuck out the baby with the bathwater? Time travel is the answer! Both *Star Trek* and *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* use it as a device to reset the clock (new Spock!) while catering to long-time fans (old Spock too!). In an era where blockbusters need to please *everyone* to break even, you can see this kind of thing happening more often. Upcoming: the return of Sarah Connor (*Terminator Genisys*)... played by someone younger and hipper.

The idea of scooting back and forth in history first razzled the masses via H.G. Wells, who coined the phrase 'time machine' with his novella of the same name – an allegorical sci-fi about social injustice, political divides and ape men. While there've only been two big-screen adaps – one of which stars Samantha Mumba – his influence remains immense. Imagine the pride Mr Wells would feel today, knowing that without his work, we wouldn't have *Hot Tub Time Machine*.



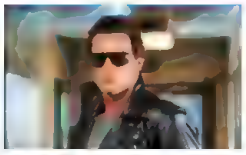
Time loops pop up again and again (and again) in our genre: they engage emotionally, appeal to our love of repetition and allow budget-conscious productions to keep using the same set. *Groundhog Day* is the granddaddy here; with its big idea reappearing in whodunits (*Source Code*) and action blow-outs (*Edge Of Tomorrow*), the possibilities are clearly endless.



Despite blowing hot air about 'fixing the past to save the future', time-travel movies are really about incest. "Are you telling me that my mom has the hots for me?!" cries Marty McFly, while in *The Terminator* our hero goes all the way with his best friend's old dear. The subtext even sneaks into an innocent frolic like *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* ("Your stepmom's cute!"). Examples are everywhere: it's a field day for Freudians whenever the sands of time start whirling about.

Because they offer such an irresistible storytelling hook, time-travel flicks can get away without thinking too hard about the science-y bit. It's all about the destination, not the journey, hence the just-go-with-it vibe of everything from *Click* to *Midnight In Paris*. True, there are 'harder' sci-fi movies that grapple with the whys, wherefores and unavoidable paradoxes (see *Primer*, below), but usually it's a case of – to quote Basil Exposition – "don't worry about those things and just enjoy yourself." **ML**

Key movies



THE TERMINATOR
1984 ★★★★★
Packing an emotional heft to match its heavy-metal action, *T1* is year zero for Cameron's blockbusting, Arnie's superstardom and a franchise that absolutely will not stop, ever.

BACK TO THE FUTURE
1985 ★★★★★
The DeLorean is an '80s relic, but Zemeckis' film is timeless, a thrill ride that relies on screenplay rather than FX. And it's about to become a musical? This thing's NUCLEAR.

PRIMER
2004 ★★★★
That a film called *Primer* should be so brain-twisting is but one conundrum in this low-fi, high-density stunner. If there's a tricksier movie about time travel, we don't want to see it.

LOOPER
2012 ★★★★★
Rian Johnson's tech-noir tale of a man hunting himself borrows from everything to forge a brave new world. Brainy and brawny, it's his passport to a galaxy far, far away.

Vital statistics

88 Need we explain? Think, McFly, think!

3 *Star Trek* movies hinged on time travel (four if you count *Galaxy Quest*).

38 No. of Groundhog Days depicted in *Groundhog Day*.

31 Number of years Arnie's been playing the (sort of) same robot.

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RANT

Is it just me?

...or are The Matrix sequels just as good as the first film?

asks Matt Looker

> The trilogy might be the last great franchise not based on a book/comic/videogame'

I LOVE THE MATRIX. The first one, obviously – not the sequels." It's a distinction I've heard so many times that it makes me want to reach for the red pills, the blue pills and every-other-colour pills just to try to escape the conversation, let alone reality. What's really so bad about *The Matrix* sequels?

OK, yes, I know *The Matrix Reloaded*'s rave scene is a sordid, techno-orgy mess filmed to satisfy the Wachowskis' own punk-y inclinations. And, yes, the Architect makes about as much sense as a drunk hobo playing Mad Libs. And, oh, the trilogy ends on such a downer – heaven forbid that a blockbuster doesn't conclude with the guy kissing the girl while fist-pumping the air.

But *The Matrix* has flaws, too. Consider Morpheus' "scorched sky" speech, or the "humans are batteries" science fart. The difference here is that, like any good sequel should, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* escalate everything tenfold. So yes, the flaws are apparent, but it's a small price to pay for the bigger, ballsier action sequences, isn't it?

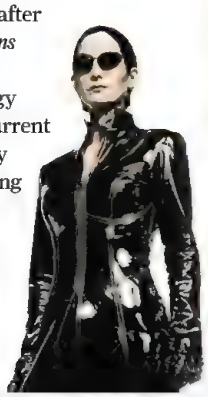
After all, we all loved experiencing bullet time while Neo bent over a bit to avoid being shot, but in *Reloaded* we experience it during a lorry-crash explosion while our hero flies through the air to save his friends, all during the climax to one of the greatest car chases ever filmed. I'll take hundreds of Architects sweatily writhing against each other in a Zion rave if it means that I get to see something that awesome.

The truth is, the only real problem with the sequels is the audience. After the first film's simpler, hacker-to-hero story, cinemagoers were resentful because the follow-ups undermined the everyman-is-chosen-one set up in order to ask more questions than they answered. Is Neo really The One? If The Oracle is just another program, can we really trust her prophecy? If Neo is just the latest in a long line of similar anomalies that have no real consequence, has that just rendered the whole story redundant?

Suddenly, those viewers who were only comfortable getting their head around the colour-coded exploration of free will in *The Matrix* complained because the sequels asked "what is the meaning of existence?" and then didn't provide an answer. But what was the alternative? Just show more of Neo beating up Agent Smith and saving the world? Why suffer another déjà vu glitch?

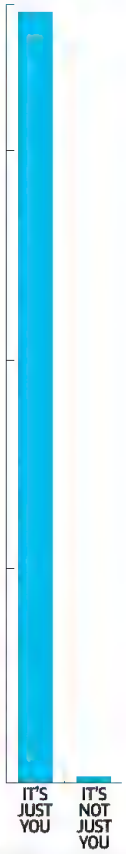
No, for those who moan about an endless run of reboots, remakes and adaptations, *The Matrix* trilogy might be the last great franchise *not* based on a book/comic/videogame/meme. For those who complain that blockbusters are dumb, mindless explosion-fests, *The Matrix* sequels spend as much time exploring great modern philosophical posers as it does showing kick-ass action. For those who whine about studios churning out sequel after sequel after sequel, *Revolutions* offers finality to a story that, Nolan's *The Dark Knight* trilogy aside, is rarely seen in our current franchise-milking age. Surely *The Matrix* sequels are everything we, as film lovers, should be applauding. Or is it just me?

Agree or disagree? Have your say at totalfilm.com and a selection will be printed next issue.



OFFICE-OMETER

The TF staff verdict is in!



LAST MONTH...

In *TF223*, Matt Glasby argued that *The Shining* isn't scary. You respond...

CHLOE BODMER It's unsettling... it will be different to different people. The book is terrifying.

NICHOLAS ADAMSON Depends on your imagination. I'd say it's far more creepy than scary and that lingers longest.

AMANDA ELLIOT I found it scary, and also surprisingly funny.

CHRIS BARNES It's not, but it's a great movie.

LIANNE GRAY It's one of the scariest films I've ever seen.

ANDY WHEELER It's a masterclass in tension building. It's my second favourite horror film but I agree it's not scary. It's unsettling, eerie and brilliantly acted from start to finish.

SAMUEL HONYWILL It's creepy as all hell. Always felt the slow burn was integral to it, makes me feel uneasy.

DAN STEPHENS Being scared by a film is a very personal thing. You have to open yourself up to it.

LOUISE TOOTH The book is creepier. The music in the film makes it unnerving and eerie

KRISTIAN DOBSON It's not very scary, but so what? I don't find films scary any more. Doesn't stop it from being brilliant.

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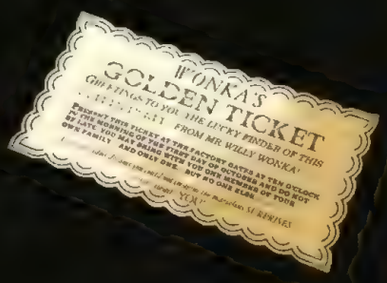

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Hand screen printed film inspired T-shirts and apparel

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TF saves you a night out every month. This issue, Transformers: Age Of Extinction gets cut down.

FADE IN:

EXT: EARTH, YEARS AGO. Think the opening of *Prometheus*, but with exploding dinosaurs instead of that naked Blue Man Group guy.

MICHAEL BAY
Where are all the product-placement ops? Screw you, land before time – let's fast-forward!

INT: CIA OFFICE, PRESENT DAY

KELSEY GRAMMER
Transformers suck – let's kill 'em all. Autobot, Decepticon, whatever. It's not like anyone can tell the difference.

INT: DISUSED CINEMA, NOWHERESVILLE. Inventor MARK WAHLBERG – stop laughing – noses through a junkpile.

MARK WAHLBERG
Let's see if we can salvage something from this piece of utter, utter crap! I refer, of course, to this battered old truck I've just found.

MARK fixes up the truck, which turns out to be OPTIMUS 'PAST HIS' PRIME.

OPTIMUS PRIME
Thank you, human, for swabbing out what for your sake I'm going to call my exhaust pipe.

MARK WAHLBERG
The last time I got into a speaking-to-things-not-people situation it rained Razzie nominations.

OPTIMUS PRIME
Well, we do like to set the bar high, as Rosie Huntington-Whiteley will tell you…

CIA DOUCHES and robo-bounty hunter LOCKDOWN arrive to shoot the place up. MARK and daughter NICOLA PELTZ are saved by OPTIMUS and NICOLA'S secret boyfriend JACK REYNOR, whom MARK is ickily jealous of.

NICOLA PELTZ
Aww, shoot – caught in a love triangle: me, Jack and Michael Bay's perving camera. Heck, it's as if my short shorts have more personality than I do!

JACK REYNOR
I'd have said 'as much as', to be honest.

OPTIMUS PRIME
We need back-up! Calling all Autobots! Preferably stereotype-embodying ones!

The call is heeded by BUMBLEBEE, JOHN GOODMAN-BOT (redneck nightmare), KEN WATANABE-BOT (every Japanese cliché under the rising sun) and another one no one cares about.

INT: STANLEY TUCCI'S APPLE-STORE WHITE TECH-COMPANY HQ

STANLEY TUCCI
We've discovered the silliest word in the universe: 'Transformium'. It turns an already-daft movie into one with the IQ of a shoe!

The AUTOBOTS storm the facility, only to get a bollocking from STANLEY.

STANLEY TUCCI
The world doesn't need you anymore! We can create our own wondrous yet charmless giant robots!

The heroes all wind up on LOCKDOWN's ship, which conceals a secret: it's plagiarised from H.R. Giger.

NICOLA PELTZ
Irritating squeal! I'm not walking down those cables!

JACK REYNOR
You've got to! It's the only genuinely exciting scene in the movie!

OPTIMUS gets a sword, MARK gets an alien gun and the audience gets piles.

OPTIMUS PRIME
To China! For vital plot reasons! And sweet-ass tax breaks!

EXT: HONG KONG
The warring robots trash the place for several hours, until all that's left standing is all the third-party branding.

OPTIMUS PRIME
You know which thread we should pick up? Those dinosaurs. After a glug of a popular beverage! (Beverage may vary depending on territory.)

OPTIMUS unleashes the DINOBOTS, allowing their untamed majesty to blaze across the screen. For five minutes.

KELSEY dies for being evil. STANLEY lives for being evil but funny. SOPHIA MYLES – hang on, who was she again?

OPTIMUS PRIME
Well, we won again, whoop de doo. But wait! I'm not going to stand here and do my usual pompous sign-off. I'm going to do it in space! Call me when it's time for the next reboot…

FIN

Next month: *Guardians Of The Galaxy*

WORDS: MATTHEW LEYLAND

COMING NEXT ISSUE… ON SALE 26 SEPTEMBER

Ultimate winter movie preview! Ultimate winter TV preview too! A great big interview with one of the coolest directors on the planet! Hot young talent from a galaxy far, far away… Maze Runners! Turtles! Or dolphins!

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Andy Lee - DAILY STAR SUNDAY

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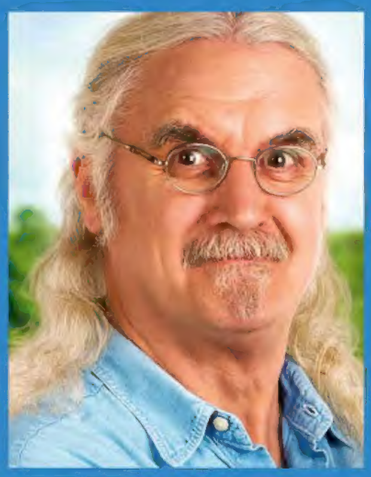
David Aldridge - BBC 5 Live

"AN ENORMOUSLY ENTERTAINING HEART-WARMER"
Baz Bamigboye - DAILY MAIL

FROM THE CREATORS OF OUTNUMBERED

WHAT WE DID ON OUR HOLIDAY



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